

Submission  
No 105

**INQUIRY INTO INQUIRY INTO ELDER ABUSE IN NEW  
SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

I am a nurse working in a residential aged care facility in rural NSW. Elder abuse occurs frequently. I have witnessed the results of elder abuse.

The most prevalent form of elder abuse is that of neglect. Neglecting the needs of the older person. Unmet basic needs for example, ensuring adequate hydration which resulted in dehydration causing great distress to the resident. Failure to change the position of a person for several hours for people that have limited movement. This results in discomfort to the resident. It can very quickly result in bed sores causing much pain for the resident. Residents being left in incontinent aids all night and for hours the next day. Failing to allow a resident to sit on the toilet for sufficient time to enable defecation to occur. The result of this is impaction of bowel contents, constipation and the possibility of a bowel obstruction. Resulting in great discomfort to the resident, and unnecessary enemas & invasive procedures. Failure in placing a resident in an upright position while eating a meal. This creates discomfort to the resident when coughing occurs and the resident may vomit and inhale the vomitus material. This will cause aspiration pneumonia which is a life threatening illness. Failure to communicate with a resident for days and months. The resident may not have any visitors and this very soon leads to depression.

Another form of elder abuse would be exerting excessive force on a resident suffering with dementia during care. This is very distressing for the resident.

Failure to provide adequate pain relief causes great discomfort to residents also.

The main cause of these forms of elder abuse is because the owners and managers of the facilities are unwilling to pay the costs associated with providing adequate care. Failure to employ adequate numbers of experienced nursing and care staff. Insufficient supervision by a registered nurse because she /he is usually pre-occupied with fulfilling paperwork requirements, and administering medications.

Suggestions would be to employ more registered nurses providing direct supervision and education and assistance when required. The nurse to patient ratio needs to be improved. Nurses and care staff should have pay parity to that of public hospitals in order to attract nurses into aged care. It is essential to have a registered nurse in all aged care facilities.