ADDITIONAL TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE – EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM ZAMBIA

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to bring out additional types of elder abuse to the existing scientific literature on elder abuse. On the basis of the qualitative research done in one of the rural districts [Kalulu District] of Zambia with community leaders and organizations dealing with the problem of elder abuse, it is evident that besides physical, financial/material, verbal and neglect abuses as widely shown in the available scientific literature on elder abuse, additional two types of elder abuse are also taking place in Zambia. These are spiritual abuse and political abuse. Since social workers are among the main frontline workers in addressing the problem of elder abuse, this article argues that these revelations have serious implications on social work education and practice as well as on future researches with regard to the global phenomenon of elder abuse. This is because the revelations suggest new ways of thinking about the problem of elder abuse. Thus the main field of application of this article is social work.

Keywords: Additional; types of elder abuse; Zambia

Introduction

This article adds new knowledge to the existing literature on the types of elder abuse. The article is written on the basis of the existing scientific literature on elder abuse and on the empirical evidence based on the qualitative research on elder abuse which I did in Kalulu District of Zambia in 2014 for the period of seven months (June to December, 2014). In order to have a logical presentation, the article is written in the following order: first the concept of elder abuse is defined. The second part focuses on bringing out the different types/forms of elder abuse as shown in the existing scientific literature. The third shows the findings of my study on the basis of the qualitative

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[2] **NOTE:** There is no potential conflict of interest regarding this manuscript. However, for the sake of protecting the identity of the research informants, I have replaced the actual district where the study was done with an aliases/assumed district

research which I did in Kalulu District of Zambia. The fourth part draws some implications of the various issues raised in this article on social work education and practice. Finally, the fifth part is a conclusion.

Definitions of elder abuse

To start the ball rolling, let me say that there is no universally agreed upon definition of elder abuse. This is because elder abuse is a very broad and complex phenomenon (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002). According to Wolf (2000) elder abuse is a term with broad meaning, including many forms and examples, always describing harm or loss to an older person. Payne (2005:2) argues that 'the term elder abuse captures virtually any possible harm inflicted on an older person by society, care setting, or individual'. World Health Organization (WHO) has also defined the concept of elder abuse. This buzz organization defines elder abuse as a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or stress to an older person (WHO 2012:1).

When I critically look at the above definitions, there are two important things which I am able to see. First, I can see that elder abuse takes many forms. Second, I can see that the common denominator of all these definitions is that elder abuse is an act that hurts or painfully disturb the life of an elder person. Although the meaning of the word 'elder person' is not provided in the above definitions, in this article, the term elder person is used to refer to any person who is aged 60 years and above. This is because the main part of this article is written on the basis of the empirical evidence on elder abuse in Zambia. In Zambia the yardstick of categorizing someone to be an elder person is 60 years and above (Zambia National Ageing Policy, 2012). This yardstick is also in line with the United Nations (UN) definition of elder people. The UN agreed cutoff is 60+ years to refer to the elder population (WHO, 2012). Thus, this article should be seen to center on bringing out the additional types of abuse suffered by people who are aged 60 years and above as evidenced in Kalulu District of Zambia. Furthermore, in this article the word elder abuse is defined as any intentional/deliberate act that involves hurting or painfully disturbing the life of any person aged 60 years and above. The act can be done either by an individual person, institution, community or larger society. This act may also be done either once or repeatedly and the harm may take several forms (Payne, 2005).

Literature review on the types or forms of elder abuse

Available scientific literature classifies elder abuse into five main types or forms. These are physical abuse; verbal abuse; financial/material abuse and neglect (Wolf, 2000; Iborra 2009; World Report on Violence and Health, 2002; Mupila, 2008; McAlpine, 2008; HelpAge International, 2011 and WHO, 2012). Below are the detailed descriptions of what is involved in each of these types.

First, physical abuse: this refers to intentional acts that cause physical harm to the body of an elder person. Examples of this type of abuse may include beating, slapping,

hitting, burning, and pushing among others of an elder person (Wolf, 2000; Iborra, 2009; McAlpine, 2008; Mupila, 2008; HelpAge International, 2011 and WHO, 2012).

Second, verbal abuse: This refers to any intentional acts mainly in form of words, which may cause harm to an elder person. Examples of this type of abuse may include insulting or using filthy language, shouting, and unnecessary blaming an elder person (Wolf, 2000; Iborra, 2009; McAlpine, 2008; Mupila, 2008; HelpAge International, 2011 and WHO, 2012).

Third, financial/material abuse: this refers to any intentional act which involves illegal or non-authorized use of an elder person's financial and/or other material resources which result into causing harm to an elder person. Examples of this type of abuse may include deliberate misusing of the elder person's financial or other material things, falsifying their signature which makes it possible for the abuser to begin to use the elder person's resources; forcing them to sign documents which may make the elder person to lose their financial or material resources (Wolf, 2000; Iborra, 2009; McAlpine, 2008; Mupila, 2008; HelpAge International, 2011 and WHO, 2012).

Fourth, sexual abuse: this type of abuse refers to any intentional act which involves forcing sexual activity that may arouse the sexual feelings of an elder person without his/her own desires or for the perpetrator to gain sexual satisfaction. Examples here could include rape, molest or showing pornographic materials, forcing elder people to commit sexual activities amongst themselves or kissing an elder person (Wolf, 2000; Iborra, 2009; McAlpine, 2008; Mupila, 2008; HelpAge International, 2011 and WHO, 2012).

Fifth, neglect: this simply refers to intentional failure to meet one's own obligations in caring for the elder person. Examples here could include refusing to attend to the needs of the elder people even if the resources are available; leaving them to stay in soiled clothes or beddings; leaving them alone without anyone nearby to give them help when they need help among others (Wolf, 2000; Iborra, 2009; McAlpine, 2008; Mupila, 2008; HelpAge International, 2011 and WHO, 2012).

Besides the above types of elder abuse, some writers also bring out psychological or emotional abuse as another type or form of elder abuse (Wolf, 2000; Iborra, 2009). In as much as this may be true, I think that psychological or emotional abuse should not stand on its own as another type of elder abuse. This is because it cuts across all the above types of elder abuse. For example, if an elder person is physically, financially/materially, sexually, verbally abused or neglected, psychological abuse also takes place. Thus, in my own thinking psychological abuse should be seen as a negative effect or consequence that takes place whenever the elder person is abused. My argument is also supported by the findings of my study in Zambia where psychological abuse was not mentioned at all by any informant as the type of abuse which was recorded among the older people. Details of this will come later as I talk about elder abuse in Zambia.

All in all, from the above descriptions it can be seen that the term elder abuse is very broad. However, in addition to the above types of elder abuse, my research in Zambia

has revealed that there are other types of elder abuse which are worthy adding to the above list of elder abuse. I bring out these types below.

Additional types of elder abuse – Empirical evidence from Zambia

Before I bring out the additional types of elder abuse as established from my study in Zambia, let me provide some background information on elder abuse in Zambia which includes the statement of the problem, main aim of my study and the methodology that I used in my research. This will include description of the district where my study was done.

Background information on elder abuse in Zambia

Elder abuse is one of the biggest social problems that Zambia like many other countries globally is experiencing. Although there is no national statistics on the prevalence of elder abuse in Zambia due to lack of national surveys on elder abuse, Senior Citizens Association of Zambia (2013:1) notes that despite the elder people (that is, people aged 60 years above) in Zambia only comprising 4 percent (around 521,860) of the total 13,046,508 Zambian population and all their valuable contributions to Zambia's national development, almost every elder person in Zambia is in danger of suffering abuse. It is a daily problem affecting the whole Zambia (Times of Zambia, 2013; Senior Citizens Association of Zambia, 2013; Kamwengo, 2004). This note by the Senior Citizens Association of Zambia seems to agree with the research findings established by HelpAge International. Although not focusing on elder abuse in Zambia, HelpAge International (2011) undertook the study on the living conditions of the elder people in urban Zambia. In this study 48 percent of the older people reported that they had suffered abuse. This is an indication that a significant number of elder people in Zambia are suffering abuse.

Statement of the problem

Notwithstanding the above, many gaps exist in the available literature on elder abuse in Zambia. To begin with, available literature on elder abuse in Zambia is too generalist in nature. For example, it is not clear about the type(s) of elder abuse that is commonly suffered and the circumstances under which it takes place. The use of international literature which is mainly based on researches undertaken in developed countries also do not provide any distinction between elder abuse in rural and urban areas (Pillemer and Wolf, 1986; Wolf, 2000). Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that there is no big difference in the way people live in rural and urban areas in developed countries. In Zambia, like many other African countries, there are big differences in the way people in rural and urban areas live. For example in rural Zambia there is a collective way of living and usually most of the people know each other on personal basis. On the other hand, in urban areas, people usually live in individualistic manner and usually most of them do not know each other very well (Fuller, 1972; Kamwengo, 2004).

In light of the above gaps, my thinking was that since the social problem of elder abuse in Zambia cannot be understood using the available literature, adequate understanding of elder abuse in Zambia required undertaking intensive elder abuse studies in communities where incidences of elder abuse have been recorded. In that way, the types of elder abuse in Zambia can be well established. In this article I focus on the findings of my study in rural Zambia – Kalulu District.

Aim of the study

The main aim of the study was to explore elder abuse from the experiences of community leaders and organizations dealing with elder abuse issues in Kalulu District of Zambia. The community leaders and organizations referred to here include ward councilors, chief's representatives, village headmen, youths and women leaders, church (religious) leaders, the police, court judges, community neighborhood security watch, area development community members, nurses, clinical officers, doctors, and social workers among others.

Research Methodology

This study utilized qualitative research methodology to allow for the voices of the community leaders and organizations dealing with elder abuse in Kalulu District to be heard. Because little is known about elder abuse in Zambia, and specifically from community leaders and organizations dealing with elder abuse, this grounded approach was preferable (Pope, Loeffler, and Ferrell, 2014). One of the distinguishing features of qualitative inquiry is that it allows for the generation of new insights about the particular issue under investigation. This comes about because the researcher studies the respective phenomenon in depth with the local people with lived experiences of that phenomenon. Thus, the researcher does not go to the people who have experienced the phenomenon with the already predetermined answers to the phenomenon. Rather, the researcher goes to the people with lived experiences open-minded because he/she wants to learn from the people who have experienced the phenomenon (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Kothari, 2004). This thinking can also be thought about with reference to the popular adage which states that 'experience is the best teacher'(Osei-Hwedie, Mwansa, and Mufune, 1990:95). Thus, the participants in qualitative research are seen as the researcher's teachers or sources of knowledge (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Kothari, 2004; Creswell, 2009). In this study, my teachers were community leaders and organisations in Kalulu District dealing with elder abuse issues.

Confidentiality

Because the informants were assured that their names would not be revealed any where, I have replaced the real names of the district where the study took place with an aliases/assumed name and that is Kalulu District. The names of the informants are not also revealed. However, I have maintained the actual verbatim as they came out during the interviews.

Description of the study site – Kalulu District

My study site was Kalulu District. Kalulu District is one of the rural districts of Zambia. Kalulu District is about 950 kilometres by road from Zambia's capital city Lusaka. As of 2010 National Population Census, Kalulu District had 11, 500 people (Zambia National Census Report, 2010). The main community leaders in this district include senior chief Kalulu, village headmen, ward councillors, religious leaders, area development committe members, youth and women groups and community neighbourhood security watch officers. Other renowned community leaders include headteachers, medical officers, police officers, social workers and other heads of government institutions (Ministry of Community and Social Services Report – Kalulu District, 2014).

In terms of socio-economic development, economically, with the exception of a few government workers who are in formal employment like teachers, health workers, court workers, social workers, and police officers among others, all the community members are in informal employment and mainly subsistence farming and petty trading (Zambia National Census Report, 2010). In terms of national social security, it is mainly the government workers who have guaranteed social security. The majority of the local people including the older people do not have any access to national social security except free primary health care. Because of this, almost all the local people rely on informal social security/protection mechanisms such as that provided by the extended family members, friends and the church (Kabelenga, 2012). Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are also absent in this community. Long distances to social services, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, disease and morbidity are among other common characteristics of this district (Zambia National Census Report, 2010). Besides these social problems, it is also one of the rural districts in Zambia which has witnessed incidences of elder abuse. Ministry of Community and Social Services Report (2014) notes that incidences of elder abuse in Kalulu District are rampant. However, the actual number of incidences of elder abuse recorded so far is not well known because of lack of available statistics on the prevalence of elder abuse in Kalulu. Thus, I decided to undertake my study in this district because of the revelation that elder abuse was rampant in the district.

Type of data collected

The study was mainly qualitative in nature. However, it also contained a few closed ended questions. Thus the large chunk of the data that I collected was qualitative data and a handful statistical/numerical data. Numerical data included the background information about the informants/participants and ranking of various types of elder abuse according to the informants' experiences.

Data collection

Data collection was done following approval of my research plan at the University of Lapland in Finland where I am pursuing my doctorate degree in social sciences. Data collection took place for the period of 7 months - June to December, 2014. A semi-

structured questionnaire was used during data collection. Digital recorders were used to record the interviews. As back-up for the interviews, three digital recorders were used simultaneously whenever I conducted any interview. A notebook was also used to take down the notes during the interviews. Before any interview was conducted, the purpose of the study was explained to the potential participants and those who were willing to participate in the study signed the informed consents – two copies each. One copy remained with the informant, and I remained with another copy. Thus, no respondent was forced to participate in the study.

Number of interviews conducted

I conducted 23 in-depth interviews. Of these, 18 were one to one in-depth interviews and 5 were focus group discussions. On average each interview lasted between one hour and three hours. I conducted all the interviews myself because I wanted to make sure that I collect all the information that I wanted to know about elder abuse in Kalulu District from each informant/participant.

Selection and characteristics of the informants/participants

A total of 20 informants/participants were purposively selected to participate in the study. Of great interest among the characteristics of the participants was that all the participants had the first hand experiences with incidences of elder abuse. For example some had their own biological relatives who had been abused before and others had themselves been abused before besides experiencing and intervening in other elder abusive situations in their communities. This characteristic just confirms that elder abuse is a serious social problem in Kalulu District of Zambia. Thus, by allowing only informants/participants with elder abuse experiences, it enabled me to collect first hand information on elder abuse in Kalulu District. In terms of age, the informants/ participants aged between 27 years of age and 67 years of age. Of these, 3 were women and the rest [17] were males. This gender imbalance should not be a surprise. In Zambia, like many other African countries, there are more male leaders than female leaders. In addition, all the participants had formal education with the majority having tertially/college education and only one had primary education. Thus, the majority of the interviews were conducted in English and only 4 interviews were conducted in local language [kikonde] and later translated in English.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed manually after transcribing all the 23 interviews using the qualitative data transcribing software called Express Scribe Transcription. I first read each of the 23 transcripts several times to get a sense of the data in its entirety. During initial reading of the transcripts, open coding procedures were employed, where codes were created from what was present in the data (Pope et al., 2014). After identifying initial codes in the transcripts, I moved to focused coding. This involved making decisions about what codes were most relevant to the research objective, discarding codes that

were not relevant, and combining earlier codes that were similar. Constant comparison was used to look for similarities and differences in categories across the transcripts. Thus, the whole process was a back and forth process and as such it was very stressful (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003; Pope, et al., 2014).

Findings

In an attempt to adequately focus my interviews, the first question which I asked all the informants was: How serious is the problem of elder abuse in Kalulu District? In response, of the 20 informants, the overwhelming majority 15(75%) revealed that elder abuse was a serious problem in Kalulu and the other 5(25%) revealed that it was not very serious. Please see the narratives below:

> *„It is serious as in a such that us as the police sometimes we get it very difficult because this thing happens in homes in family setups. And you will find that the people who are energetic to come and report to the police they don't come and it is rare to for us to know exactly what has happened in the community. That is the challenge which we are facing as the police victim support unit."* **(Male informant aged 49 years).**

> *„It is a serious problem. It takes place. Daily would not be appropriate because sometimes, some days may be twice in a week."* **(Focus Group Discussion 1).**

> *"It's not daily but in a month you might have 2 cases. But in the recent past it was common, it was high I should say but of late the numbers have reduced because the police took an active role to educate the community and arrest whoever was found wanting."* **(Focus Group Discussion 3).**

From the above finding, it can be deduced that from the experiences of the community leaders and organizations dealing with elder abuse in Kalulu, elder abuse is a problem in Kalulu. Thus this finding agrees with the position held by the Senior Citizens Association of Zambia (2013) and HelpAge International (2011) that elder abuse is a common problem in Zambia.

Type (s) of elder abuse experienced

In light of the above revelations, the next question to the informants was: What types of elder abuse have you recorded/experienced in this district? The following types of elder abuse were mentioned – spiritual abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse, financial/material abuse, political abuse and neglect. Sexual and psychological abuses were not mentioned at all.

Ranking types of elder abuse according to the informants' experiences

Asked what type(s) of abuse was commonly experienced, all the 20 (100%) informants revealed that spiritual abuse where the elder people were accused of practicing witchcraft and defaming their spiritual beliefs was the main one. This was followed by neglect which was mentioned by 10(50%) of the informants. Verbal and physical abuses

came out third as they were mentioned by 8(40 %) of the informants. It should be reported here that even if neglect, verbal and physical abuses stand alone, these types of elder abuse were seen to be mainly connected to spiritual abuse. Political abuse was fourth as it was mentioned by 7(35%) of the participants. Financial/material abuse was the list and mentioned only by 2 (10%) informants.

Since I have already talked about what is involved in physical, verbal, financial/material abuses and neglect, let me also talk about what is involved in spiritual and political abuses in detail.

Spiritual abuse

As already reported, in Kalulu District it was evident that from the experiences of the informants the most common type of abuse that elder people suffered was spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse in this context refers to any intentional act to harm the elder person on the basis that he or she was a witch/wizard of the elder people. Examples here include accusations of elder people as witches/wazards. The narratives below underscore the existence of this type of elder abuse:

> *„The common elder abuse are offences common in Kalulu are witchcraft practice where older people are suspected of being witches or wizards, and the other one is mainly verbal abuse like the you find young ones use some abusive language to elderly women or men in society because of being witches."* **(Focus Group Discussion 1).**

> *„Most of the elderly patients that we have received are related to being suspected of being witches or practicing witchcraft or where maybe one person dies in the family and then they suspect an older person who is then attacked and beaten. Some have been beaten to death, we have received some that have been brought in dead, and some come in badly injured so we take care of them. As a mission hospital, apart from giving them medical treatment we also give them spiritual care and if for sure they are practicing witchcraft usually they repent and become Christians or they confess their sins. We do receive such cases yes."* **(Focus Group Discussion 5).**

> *„The most prominent one is where these elderly people are being suspected of practicing witchcraft. You find that whenever we have a sudden death, the grieved family would rather use some magical juju. They will put it within the coffin what they call chikondo[coffin], popularly known as chikondo[coffin], so at the time for the burial, you find that people instead of heading to the grave yard, they would be forced by the coffin to search for the person who is responsible for the death. Due to that, people have been buried live, people have been killed mainly elderly people."* **(Male informant aged 40).**

Important to deduce from the above finding is that neglect, verbal and physical abuses are part of spiritual abuse. It was actually learnt from the informants that neglect, verbal and physical abuses of many older people took place because many older people were seen as witches. The narrative below confirms the above deduction:

> *„Verbal abuse, neglect and physical abuse come whenever they [elder people] are accused of practicing witchcraft."* **(Male informant aged 40).**

Thus in a very critical sense, it can be said that from the experiences of the informants spiritual, verbal and physical abuses as well as neglect are inseparable.

Political abuse

Surprisingly, the informants revealed also that political abuse was also being experienced in Kalulu district. As reported here, political abuse refers to any intentional act that hurts the political life of the elder person. Examples mentioned by the informants here included forcing, deceiving or threatening the elder person to vote for a certain political candidate/party or refusing them to go and vote in an election. Please see the narratives below captured during this study:

„Yes, even political abuse. Not necessarily grabbing them but those are the children, they literally dictate to them that they would need to vote for this party otherwise they will be in problems. The same young people who take care of them are the ones who demand on them to support a particular candidate because these young people are the ones who are able to discuss, hold conversations with these political party leaders and they are the ones who are persuaded by the political parties leaders to support them and hence they are the ones the political parties leaders use to go and entice their grandparents to vote for them so that things would be better for them while in actual sense things may not be" **(Focus Group Discussion 1).**

„Political abuse happens there. There are sometime situations where by you are keeping this old person at home and then because they are unable to keep those documents [voters cards and national registration cards] and they will give you to say can you keep these things for me, then when the time to vote comes, you tell them you should vote for this one. If not you will be chased from here. Sometimes somebody even say no I will not give you the documents so that they don't go and vote." **(Male informant aged 34)**

„It is true when you look at the political interference on our old men and women you find that at provincial level at urban setup there a very few aged people and if at all there are any, they are very well informed with what is happening in terms of governance. I'm saying so because they are exposed to TV, radio and so many other facilities but those in the villages that one [political abuse] is very common because you find that these politicians, you only see them going to rural setups when it is time to vote but in town they don't normally go there because they know the people are up to date. But in the rural setup it is very common and in most cases it is the youth's that go to these old people tell them something that's wrong for example maybe if they have a candidate of their choice so they go to them and feed them that wrong information just because this candidate has bought them beer and they can go and interact with these old people because they are conversant with the language that is spoken there. And normally you will find that in the rural setup these aged, most of them, they don't know how to write and if these people are busy campaigning or maybe it's time for voting, they are just told to say the head that you see on top or the one that is the last is the one you should vote for. So if they go there for sure and this person maybe just knows how to mark automatically he or she will go for the one who is on top according to the way he or she is told. I remember an incident somewhere where this candidate is fond of putting on a jacket so they even nicknamed him, jacket man. So an old woman comes and says, who is your preferred candidate, this woman just says the jacket man but when you look at the ballot paper, so many candidates there have jackets so that woman since she has mentioned of the jacket, even when I point at my preferred candidate as a youth [election presiding officer] who is very interested in that candidate, she will go for it. So you find that in the rural setup it is very common." **(Focus Group Discussion 4).**

From the above result it is clear that some elder people in Kalulu District are also abused politically. Thus, if there is anyone who thought that political abuse among the older people was not in existence, this finding marks the beginning of changing those thoughts about elder abuse.

To summarize the above all findings, it can be said that elder abuse does not only exist in five main forms as widely documented in many scientific literatures on elder abuse (see Wolf, 2000; Iborra, 2009; McAlpine, 2008; Mupila, 2008; 2009; HelpAge International, 2011 and World Health Organisation, 2012). Rather from what was unearthed in this study, it is evident that elder abuse exists in many forms. As can be seen from the above, besides physical, verbal, financial/material abuses and neglect, two more types of elder abuse came out and these are spiritual abuse and political abuse. These findings have significant implications on social work with older people. This is because social workers are among the frontline workers in addressing the problem of elder abuse (Pritchard, 1999). Thus, let me also talk about the implications of the above findings on social work education and practice.

Implications of the above findings on social work education and practice

Critical reflections upon the above findings when narrowed down to social work education and practice with elder people raise the following implications among others:

To begin with, elder abuse should not be seen as a monolithic phenomenon. Instead, it should be seen as a multifaceted phenomenon which takes place in many forms. Thus, social workers dealing with elder abuse issues should learn to unpack the phenomenon of elder abuse. For example, they should be specific about the type or types of elder abuse they are talking about. This is because elder abuse is a very broad concept. For example, there is physical abuse, financial/material abuse; sexual abuse; spiritual abuse; political abuse and neglect among other types of elder abuse. Social workers should further learn to unpack each of these types of elder abuse to know exactly the form in which elder abuse is taking place. For example, if talking about physical abuse, it may take forms such as deliberate slapping, beating and burning of an elder person among others. If talking about spiritual abuse, it may take forms such as accusing elder people of being witches. When talking about political abuse, it may involve using political documents like voters cards of an elder person to support the win of a certain political candidate or party in an election without permission of elder people and so forth and so forth. In this way social workers can adequately think about the realistic ways of explaining and addressing that particular form or type of elder abuse.

In light of the above implication, it implies also that social workers dealing with elder abuse issues should be open-minded when thinking about ways of explaining and addressing elder abuse. Because elder abuse is a very diverse and complex phenomenon, understanding any form or type of elder abuse should involve the use of multiple perspectives and by drawing knowledge not just from academic knowledge, but also from knowledge of many people including people who are closer to the abused elder people and from the abused elder people themselves among others (Pritchard,

1999; Fook, 2002; Gray and Webb, 2013). This implies further that social workers should not approach any elder abuse situation with already preconceived or predetermined interventions. Rather, they have to look at any elder abuse situation as new and unique which requires new way of thinking if the situation is to be well addressed. This suggests further that 'one size fits all' explanations or interventions are not relevant when dealing with the social problem of elder abuse (Gough, 1999; Fook, 2002; Gray and Webb, 2013).

Lastly but not the least, it connotes that social workers should be constantly questioning and challenging the existing theoretical and empirical literature on elder abuse. In other words, it means that social workers should be very critical about what they learn in classroom or what they read in available literature on elder abuse. This requires social workers to be reflective of what is going on in different contexts, places, from their own experiences and experiences of other social workers or other professional and non professionals dealing with elder abuse (Fook, 2002; Mullaly, 2007; Gray and Webb, 2013). As has been seen elder abuse does not exist in only five main forms as shown in widely used literature on elder abuse in academic institutions. Rather it is happening in many forms. Doing so may encourage undertaking further researches on elder abuse and in so doing generate new knowledge which are essential to challenging and/ or expanding the literature on elder abuse. Policy and program directions on elder abuse can be shaped according to the types of elder abuse taking place in that particular society.

Limitations

This article is written on the basis of the qualitative data collected from one rural district of Zambia. It should be noted here that one of the main central aims of any qualitative research inquiry is to provide in-depth descriptions of a phenomenon, using a small sample of information-rich cases (Creswell, 2009; Pope et al., 2014). Therefore, the revelations made in this article should be cautiously applied to other rural parts of this world. For example, although the findings presented in this article are from a rural setting, they should not be generalized to other rural parts of the world. This is because what may be true in one [rural] setting may not be true in other [rural] settings.

Conclusion

This article has added new knowledge to the existing literature on elder abuse. On the basis of the qualitative research done in Kalulu District of Zambia, it is evident that besides physical, financial/material, verbal and neglect abuses which are widely shown in available literature on elder abuse, two more types of elder abuse should be added to the literature on elder abuse and these are spiritual abuse and political abuse. Thus this article can be useful to various stakeholders involved in elder abuse issues. This is because it has important implications of changing the way one thinks about elder abuse. Social work education and practice on elder abuse can particularly benefit from this article as it has brought out additional two big thoughts on elder abuse. However, because this article is based on qualitative research which makes it difficult to be generalized to other parts of the world, future researches should be encouraged to

investigate the prevalence of the above two types of elder abuse in other parts of the world. Undertaking separate studies in different regions of the world, for example in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America among others can be a good approach. In this way, it will clear to know the types of elder abuse that are common in different parts of the world. This may help in informing social work education and practice as well as local and international policies on elder abuse.

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