

## **The use of Elder Abuse Suspicion Index © (EASI) – screening tool – experiences and results**

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### **Summary**

Health care professionals play a key role in identifying abuse and neglect of older people. They may be the only professional workers who meet older people outside the family. (Yaffe Mark J. 2014). In Finland in 2014 in the age group of over 75 years, 37 % had been hospitalized, which highlights the fact that the elderly are a large group of users of health care services. The need for help and the simultaneous use of many social and health care services gradually increase after the age of 75, e.g. due to memory disorders (Hammar T. and Luoma M-L. 2014).

Before using a screening tool professionals must be trained to use the instrument and they have to gain knowledge on abuse of older women/elder abuse, dynamics, trauma consequences, supporting, risk assessment and safety planning. Also, professionals need to know how to follow the practical procedures of the use. There should be written guidelines how to use the screening tool, what to do after possible disclosure (screening process), there is an agreed practice in own workplace and multi-professional and multi-agency working model. Support and consultation possibilities for the professionals are important, and effective staff supervision. (Screening for violence against older persons: a training package).

It is important to adhere to professional ethical principles. The most important thing is to ensure that the rights of the elderly are realized and the professionals comply with the legislation that guides their activities and duties.

Elder Abuse Suspicion Index © (EASI) was developed and tested in Canada (Yaffe Mark J. et al. 2008). EASI – tool has been developed for competent older persons who understand the questions and are able reliably answer the questions. EASI – tool was piloted in Malmi hospital emergency and follow-up departments for the patients 75 years old or over. The piloting was a part of WHOSEFVA project. Piloting took place 15 - 21 January 2018 and 4 - 17 June 2018. Before the piloting the staff was trained to use the tool and also the practical guidelines were developed.

The questions were introduced to competent older persons. Competency was assessed by the staff based on their experience and knowledge of an older person. A total of 38 forms were filled in during the two pilot periods. 5 patients reported being subjected to at least one form of violence mentioned in the tool. They were threats and physical and sexual violence. Two elderly women refused to answer questions. One of them was escorted by her adult son. Employees became concerned about the patient's situation. Another elderly woman refused to talk to anyone about it and didn't want any help/didn't feel she needed help. The patient went home from the ward.

The professionals gave feedback that questioning about abuse from older persons in emergency was a sensitive issue for the patients and many of them refused to answer.



## References

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