

Media release

17 March 2020

New films tackle elder abuse of people with dementia

The National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) will today launch a new film series: *Balancing the older person's rights and carers needs: Elder abuse in the context of dementia*, to provide health and aged care workers with the knowledge and confidence to respond to elder abuse in the context of dementia.

Associate Professor Bianca Brijnath, Director of Social Gerontology at NARI, said the films will lead to improved care of some of the most vulnerable older people in our community.

"A consistent and fair approach to dealing with abuse in the context of dementia is possible," said Associate Professor Brijnath. "Steps can be taken which keep families together and stop abuse."

The films were developed in response to NARI research that showed health and aged care workers wanted clearer advice on what to do when they encounter abuse in the context of dementia.

"Workers struggle to balance carer needs and the older person's rights, grappling with the ethics of elder abuse because of carer stress," said Associate Professor Brijnath. "They are also often unsure whether to instigate police or legal intervention."

"We expect the films will inspire consistency and quality of responses across the health and aged care services sector."

The films address three common types of elder abuse: financial, neglect and physical violence. They role-play how frontline workers should respond to suspected elder abuse, and provide explicit instructions on what to do and where to go for help.

NARI research shows older people with dementia are uniquely vulnerable to elder abuse as cognitive impairment means they are often unable to stop or report the abuse, which occurs largely within families.

Associate Professor Brijnath said the films are based on the lived experiences of people. "While performed by actors, the film's stories are very real and were co-written with carers, older people and service providers."

She said the films have been validated across health, aged care, and social services as well as among older people and their carers.

The elder abuse films were made in conjunction with production company Why Documentaries and funded by State Trustees Australia Foundation.

Films can be accessed via the NARI website: www.nari.net.au.

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Balancing the older person's rights and carers needs: Elder abuse in the context of dementia, will be launched online at www.nari.net.au, at 11am on Tuesday 17 March 2020.

Ends

Notes to editor:

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Find NARI on Twitter: [@NAgeingRI](https://twitter.com/NAgeingRI)

The National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) is Australia's only independent national research institute dedicated to ageing. NARI is committed to improving the life and health of older people through research and its translation into evidence based practice.