

Systematic Review of Sexual Assault Prevention Methods for Older Adults: Exploring the Hidden Needs of a Growing Population

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Abstract : Rape stereotypes have long involved the assault of young females by strangers desiring sex. As such, older adult women and men have largely been excluded from research, policies, and awareness raising initiatives to address sexual violence. Moreover sexual assault accounts for the most underreported type of abuse experienced by older adults, highlighting a need to expand our knowledge base in this area. Thus a systematic review of peer-reviewed scholarly articles and reports was conducted to explore the ways sexual assault has been prevented among older adults in recent years and to identify implications for researchers and practitioners as they aim to meet the needs of this population. Articles and reports published during or after 2007 were eligible if their focus included methods to address sex abuse among older adults as well as practice or research implications. Forty-four articles met this criteria and were included in this systematic review. The findings from this review will provide an in-depth understanding of the under-researched issue of sexual violence among older adult women and men as well as current prevention strategies. In addition, implications and recommendations will be provided for practitioners, educators and researchers as they aim to meet the hidden needs of this growing yet under-researched population.

Keywords : elder, rape, sexual assault, sexual violence

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