

Association between Elder Mistreatment and Suicidal Ideation among Community-Dwelling Chinese Older Adults in the USA

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Abstract : Aims: Elder mistreatment and suicidal ideation are important public health concerns among aging populations. This study will examine the association between elder mistreatment and suicidal ideation among Chinese older adults in the USA. Methods: Guided by a community-based participatory research approach, in this study we conducted in-person interviews with Chinese older adults aged 60 years and older in the Greater Chicago area from 2011 to 2013. Elder mistreatment was assessed by a 10-item instrument derived from the Hwalek-Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Test (H-S/EAST) and the Vulnerability to Abuse Screening Scale (VASS). Suicidal ideation was assessed by the ninth item of the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and the Geriatric Mental State Examination-Version A (GMS-A). Results: Overall, 3,159 Chinese older adults participated in this study, and their mean age was 72.8 years. After controlling for age, gender, education, income, medical comorbidities, depressive symptoms, and social support, elder mistreatment was significantly associated with 2-week suicidal ideation (OR 2.46, 95% CI 1.52--4.01) and 12-month suicidal ideation (OR 2.46, 95% CI 1.62--3.73). With respect to gender differences, the study found that the association remained significant for older women but not for older men after adjusting for all confounding factors. Conclusion: As the largest epidemiology study conducted among Chinese older adults in the USA, this study suggests that elder mistreatment is significantly associated with 2-week and 12-month suicidal ideation in older women but not in older men. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to explore the mechanisms through which elder mistreatment links with suicidal ideation.

Keywords : suicidal ideation, elder abuse, family violence, Asian health equity

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