



Identifying Institutional Elder Abuse through Coronial Systems

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Central Premise

- ▶ Coronial systems can help identify institutional elder abuse if reporting systems are aligned to intercept appropriate cases.

Definitions & Context

- ▶ Institutional abuse
 - ▶ Overt, Program, Systems
 - ▶ Institutional Elder Abuse
- ▶ Institution
 - ▶ Residential, In-home
- ▶ Deaths
 - ▶ ABS Australian Cause of Death Statistics

Limitations of Coronial Systems

- ▶ Infrequently investigate deaths in RACS
 - ▶ Occasionally looked at issues, make findings
- ▶ Reportable Deaths:
 - ▶ Circumstance:
 - ▶ Violent, Unnatural, Sudden...
 - ▶ Setting:
 - ▶ Custody, Care, Health...
 - ▶ Care excludes RACS (includes everything else)
- ▶ Age proxies

Limitations of Death Reviews

- ▶ Do not target elder abuse but alignment offers opportunity
- ▶ Qld Death Review process uses *Domestic and Family Protection Violence Act* definitions
 - ▶ Emotional or Psychological Abuse, Economic Abuse
 - ▶ Family Relationships, Informal Care Relationships
- ▶ Acts not Omissions: Neglect?

Prevalence, Incidence, Data

- ▶ Do not include older persons in institutional care
 - ▶ Rarely capture cases of institutional abuse
 - ▶ Misses many with high needs, who lack capacity or are most vulnerable
 - ▶ Limited by gaps in reporting:
 - ▶ Restrictive Practices
 - ▶ Serious Incidents

Prevention of Death

- ▶ Comprehensive analysis by Ibrahim et al
 - ▶ Relevant areas: choking, medication, restraints, suicide, absences, resident-to-resident aggression
 - ▶ Failed to capture areas not reported to Coroners
 - ▶ Clearly needs to be stronger alignment between systems

Other factors

- ▶ Deaths in RACS are inevitable
- ▶ Deaths in RACS are not preventable
- ▶ Public health gains are too small
- ▶ Mythology of central Commonwealth responsibility
- ▶ Entrenched Ageism

Solutions & Alternatives

- ▶ Clarifying Key Definitions
- ▶ Reforms to Aged Care Regulation
- ▶ Enabling other Post Death Investigative Processes
- ▶ Engaging in Coronial and Death Review Law Reform
- ▶ Improving and Aligning Data Standards

