



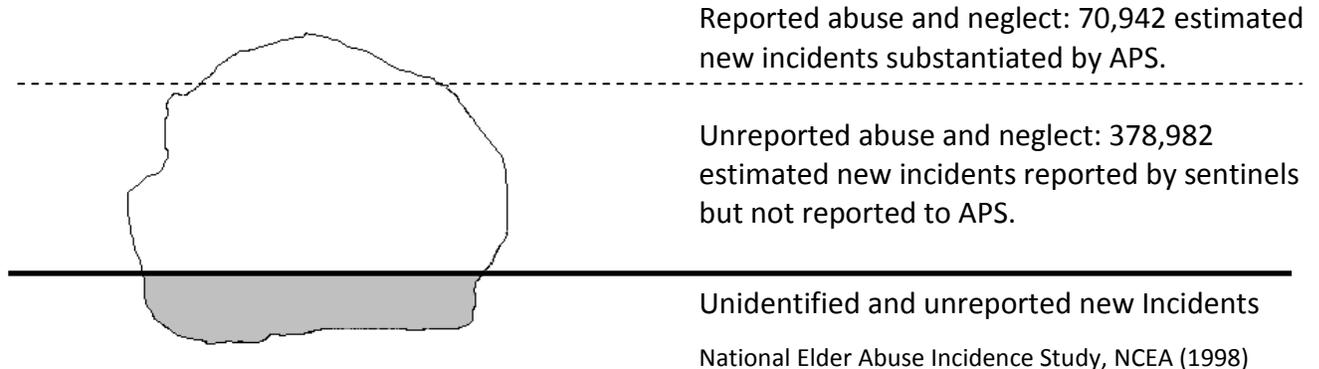
**America is aging at a tremendous rate:** In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau counted 281.4 million people in the United States. Of this number; 35 million, or one out of every eight people were age 65 and over.<sup>1</sup> Since 1900, the over 65 population has doubled three times.<sup>2</sup> 10,000 people in the U.S. turn 65 every day—this will continue for 20 years.<sup>3</sup> By 2050, over 20% of Americans will be over 65 years of age.

The fastest growing segment of American’s population is those 85 and up.<sup>4</sup> During the twentieth century, the population of oldest-old Americans (those age 85 and older) grew from 100,000 to 4.2 million.<sup>5</sup>

The United States Census Bureau projects that **California’s elderly population will nearly double** within the next 20 years - from 3.7 million to more than 6.4 million.

**Elder Abuse: a growing, yet hidden problem:** Elder mistreatment is defined as intentional actions that cause harm or create a serious risk of harm (whether or not harm is intended) to a vulnerable elder by a caregiver or other person who stands in a trust relationship to the elder. This includes failure by a caregiver to satisfy the elder’s basic needs or to protect the elder from harm.<sup>6</sup>

Studies show that between 2 and 11% of the nation’s older adult population experiences abuse, neglect, financial exploitation or self-neglect each year (numbers vary according to the type of abuse perpetrated).<sup>6,7</sup> Adult Protective Services agencies investigated 461,135 reports of abuse in 2004, representing a 15.6% increase since the previous national survey in 2000.<sup>8</sup>



Research indicates that officially reported cases are just the tip of the iceberg. **For every report of elder mistreatment that is made to Adult Protective Services, it is estimated that at least five cases go unreported.**<sup>9</sup> In California, the California Attorney General’s Office estimates that 200,000 seniors and dependent adults (people 18-64 years old who have a disability that makes them vulnerable) are abused in our state every year.

**Dementia and elder abuse:** Research indicates that people with dementia are at greater risk of elder abuse than those without.<sup>10 11</sup> Approximately 5.1 million Americans over 65 have some kind of dementia. Close to half of all people over 85, the fastest growing segment of our population have Alzheimer’s disease or another kind of dementia. By 2025, most states are expected to see an increase in Alzheimer prevalence.<sup>12</sup> One 2009 study revealed that close to 50% of people with dementia experience some kind of abuse.<sup>13</sup>

**Those Who Are Abused:** Female elders are abused at a higher rate than males. The older you are, the more likely it is that you will be abused.<sup>14</sup>

**Those Who Abuse:** The vast majority of abusers are family members (approximately 90%), most often adult children, spouses/partners and others.<sup>15</sup> Family members who abuse drugs or alcohol, who have a mental/emotional illness, and who feel burdened by their caregiving responsibilities abuse at higher rates than those who do not.<sup>16</sup>

**Mistreatment in Nursing Homes and other Long Term Care Facilities:** Over 2.8 million older Americans live in the nation's 64,000 licensed care facilities.<sup>17</sup>

An estimated 10% of the complaints or about 20,000 complaints received by the Long Term Care Ombudsmen during fiscal year 1998 involved allegations of abuse, gross neglect, or exploitation.<sup>18</sup> A study conducted by the U.S. General Accountability Office in May 2008 revealed that state surveys understate problems in licensed facilities: 70% of state surveys miss at least one deficiency and 15% of surveys miss actual harm and immediate jeopardy of a nursing home resident.<sup>19</sup>

***In 1998, the United States General Accounting Office reported that one in three California nursing homes was cited for serious or potentially life-threatening care problems.***

**Impact of Elder Mistreatment:** Victims of elder abuse are known to experience depression, anxiety and other mental health issues. Elders who experienced mistreatment, even modest mistreatment, had a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who had not been mistreated.<sup>20</sup> Elder financial abuse costs older Americans more than \$2.6 billion per year.<sup>21</sup>

**References** <sup>1</sup> U.S. Administration on Aging 2004, *A Profile of Older Americans*. <sup>2</sup> Friedland RB & Summer L. (2005). Demography Is Not Destiny, Revisited, The Commonwealth Fund. <sup>3</sup> Alliance for Aging Research. (1999). *Independence for Older Americans: An Investment for Our Nation's Future*. <sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Projections, 2008. <sup>5</sup> Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics 2004, *Older Americans*. <sup>6</sup> Bonnie, RJ, & Wallace, RB (Eds.). (2003). *Elder mistreatment: Abuse, neglect and exploitation in an aging America*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. <sup>7</sup> National Institute of Justice. *The National Elder Mistreatment Study, 2009*. <sup>8</sup> National Center on Elder Abuse, *The 2004 Survey of State Adult Protective Services: Abuse of Adults 60 Years of Age and Older, 2006*. <sup>9</sup> The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study, Final Report, September 1998. Prepared for the Administration for Children and Families and the Administration on Aging in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by the National Center on Elder Abuse at the American Public Human Services Association in collaboration with Westat, Inc. <sup>10</sup> Cooney C, Howard R, Lawlor B. Abuse of vulnerable people with dementia by their carers: Can we identify those most at risk? *Int J Geriatr Psych* 2006;21:564-71. <sup>11</sup> VandeWeerd C, Paveza GJ. (2005). Verbal mistreatment in older adults: A look at persons with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers in the state of Florida. *J Elder Abuse Negl*;17:11-30. <sup>12</sup> Alzheimer's Association, *2009 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figure*. <sup>13</sup> Cooper C, Selwood A, et al. Abuse of people with dementia by family carers: representative cross sectional survey. *Brit Med J*, 2009;338:b155. <sup>14</sup> The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study, Final Report, 1998. <sup>15</sup> Ibid. <sup>16</sup> Schiamberg LB & Gans D. (1999). An Ecological Framework for Contextual Risk Factors in Elder Abuse by Adult Children *J Elder Abuse Negl* 11 (1), 79-103. <sup>17</sup> National Ombudsman Resource Center website at <http://www.ltcOmbudsman.org> <sup>18</sup> Hawes C. *Elder Abuse in Residential Long-Term Care Facilities: What is Known about Prevalence, Causes, and Prevention*. Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance (June 18, 2002). <sup>19</sup> U.S. Government Accounting Office Report. *Nursing Homes: Federal Monitoring Surveys Demonstrate Continued Understatement of Serious Care Problems and CMS Oversight Weaknesses* (GAO-08-517, May 2008). <sup>20</sup> Lachs MS, Williams CS, O'Brien S, Pillemer KA, Charlson ME. (1998). The mortality of elder mistreatment. *J Am Med Assoc*; 280(5): 428-432. <sup>21</sup> MetLife Mature Market Institute, *Broken Trust: Elders, Family and Finances*, March 2009. <sup>22</sup> Dyer, Pavlik, Murphy & Hyman, (2000). The high prevalence of depression and dementia in elder abuse or neglect. *J Am Geriatr Soc*.;48(2):205-8. <sup>23</sup> Lachs, Williams, O'Brien, Hurst, & Horwitz. (1997). Risk factors for reported elder abuse and neglect: a nine-year observational cohort study. *Gerontologist*;37(4):469-74.