

## Publication

### An ecological systems examination of elder abuse : a week in the life of adult protective services

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Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, this study examined allegations of elder abuse made to Kentucky Adult Protective Services (APS) and the investigation that followed in order to understand how APS addressed the needs of abused elders. Elder abuse allegations made to APS during the study week were collected using three study tools. Allegations and resulting investigations were analyzed. During the study week, APS received 1,002 calls alleging elder abuse. Of these, 483 were categorized as reports needing protective services, with 177 reports screened in for investigation and 167 actually investigated. Results describe characteristics of abuse calls, investigations, victims, perpetrators, and total investigation times. Substantiation ratio, recidivism, and whether investigation increased or decreased the risk of abuse were also assessed. An examination of APS casework through the lens of nested systems frames the study findings and discussion. Such an examination has the potential to improve the quality of services provided to older adults.

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