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Conceptualizing elder abuse: a step forward

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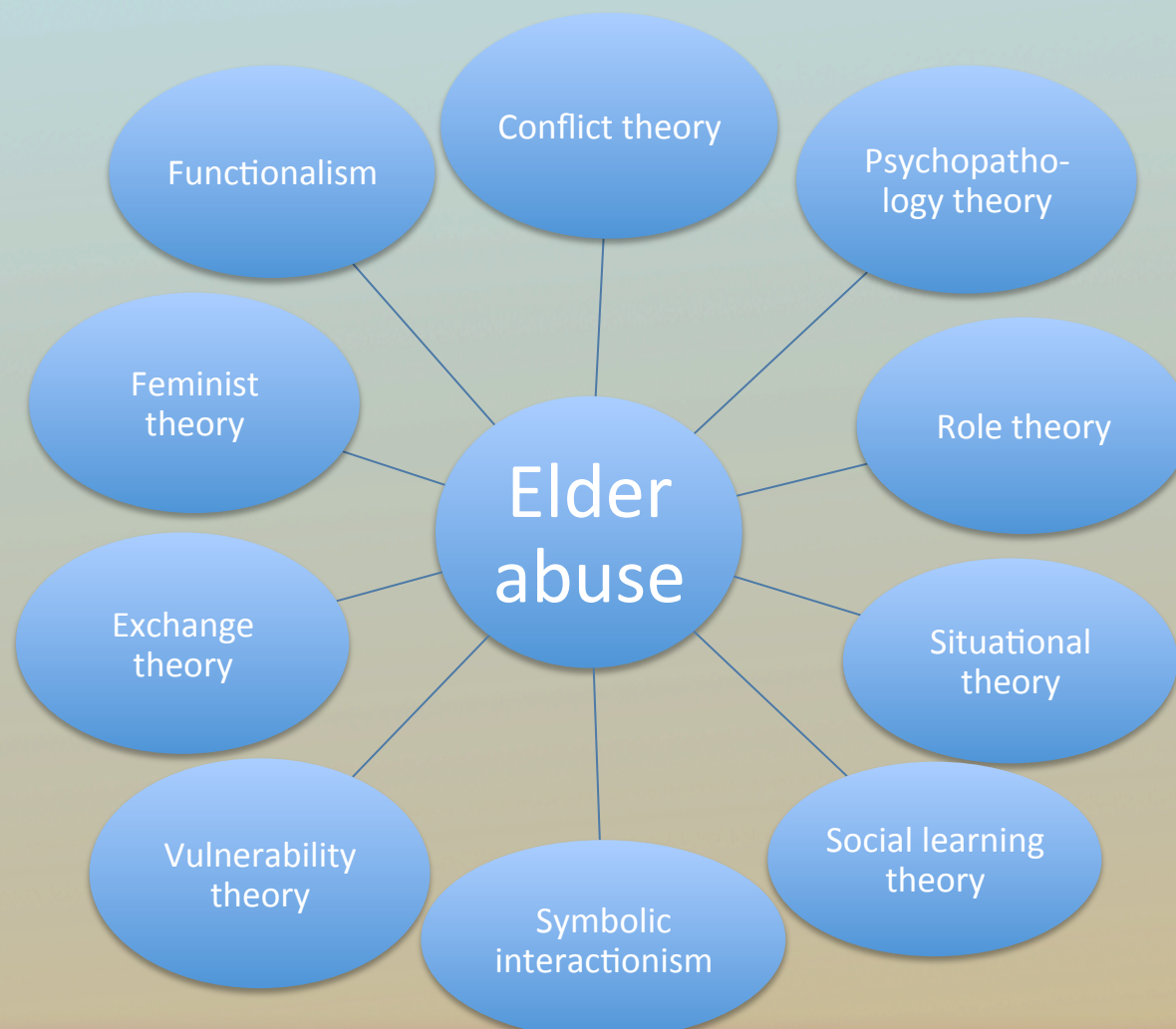
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# Theoretical perspectives for understanding elder abuse



## Problematic aspects

- Lack of empirical work;
- Lack of explanatory power;
- Research on elder abuse has been instigated mostly by practitioners;
- Translation of perspectives from other areas;
- Number of theories were taken from different disciplines



# Current knowledge about elder abuse (1)

## Risk factors for elder abuse

### *Characteristics of victim:*

social isolation, lack of social support, dependence,

age, gender, impairment, depression, loneliness

## Current knowledge about elder abuse (2)

### *Characteristics of perpetrator:*

mental disorders, stress, dependence on older person, substance abuse, history of violence, behavioral problems, inexperience, lack of empathy

### **Characteristics of environment:**

ageism, sexism, negative attitudes, perceptions, cultural norms

## Current knowledge about elder abuse (3)

### Prevalence of elder abuse in the Netherlands

- Prevalence studies: 5.6% (Comijs et al. 1998)
- 656 cases were detected by report centers of elder abuse (Movisie 2009)
- Police records: 1.7% older than 66 years

# Qualitative research on elder abuse in the Netherlands (1)

## Research questions

### *Background of elder abuse*

- How can elder abuse be defined?
- What role do socio-demographic factors play in elder abuse?

### *Perspectives of people involved*

- How do people experience elder abuse?
- How is the quality of life of older people affected by elder abuse?



## Qualitative research on elder abuse in the Netherlands (2)

*Explanatory models:*

- How is the phenomenon of elder abuse currently explained by theoretical frameworks?
- How can elder abuse be explained by intergenerational transmission?

# Qualitative research on elder abuse in the Netherlands (3)

## Methods:

Free-listing

Observations

Semi-structured  
interviews

Life histories

Pile sorts

Case studies

Family histories

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**Thank you for your attention!**