

# **Screening Tools for Elder Maltreatment:** ***Three Tools for Consideration***

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Barbara Dieker, DHHS, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging

Erica Smith, DOJ, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Selection of Screening Tools: Key Considerations

- Burden on the provider
  - Number of questions
  - Type of scale used in the tool
- Focus of elder abuse questions (physical, psychological, sexual, financial, neglect)

## *Other Considerations Discussed*

- Cross cutting — versatile for use in various health care environments and populations
- Usability for cognitively intact as well as cognitively impaired/mildly cognitively impaired individuals

# Screening Tools for Consideration

Name of Screening Tool	<i>Tool screens for —</i>				
	Physical Abuse	Psychological/ Emotional Abuse	Neglect by Others	Sexual Abuse	Financial or Material Exploitation
Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (EASI)	X	X	X	X	X
Vulnerability to Abuse Screening Scale (VASS)	X	X		X	X
Hwalek-Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Test (H-S/EAST)	X	X		X	

# Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (EASI)

1. Have you relied on people for any of the following: bathing, dressing, shopping, banking, or meals?
2. Has anyone prevented you from getting food, clothes, medication, glasses, hearing aid or medical care, or from being with people you wanted to be with?
3. Have you been upset because someone talked to you in a way that made you feel shamed or threatened?
4. Has anyone tried to force you to sign papers or to use your money against your will?
5. Has anyone made you afraid, touched you in ways that you did not want, or hurt you physically?
6. Doctor: Elder abuse may be associated with findings such as: poor eye contact, withdrawn nature, malnourishment, hygiene issues, cuts, bruises, inappropriate clothing, or medication compliance issues. Did you notice any of these today or in the last 12 months?

# Hwalek-Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Test (H-S/EAST)\*

1. **Has anyone close to you tried to hurt or harm you recently?\*\***
2. Do you feel uncomfortable with anyone in your family?
3. Does anyone tell you that you give them too much trouble?
4. **Has anyone forced you to do things that you didn't want to do?**
5. Do you feel that nobody wants you around?
6. Who makes decisions about your life... like how you should live or where you should live?

\*From original 15-item tool. Using discriminant analysis, the authors found that the six items discriminated as effectively between abuse and non-abuse groups as did the original 15 items.

\*\*Bolded items are same as in VASS tool.

# Vulnerability to Abuse Screening Scale (VASS)\*

1. Are you afraid of anyone in your family?
2. **Has anyone close to you tried to hurt or harm you recently?\*\***
3. Has anyone close to you called you names or put you down or made you feel bad recently?
4. Does someone in your family make you stay in bed or tell you you're sick when you know you aren't?
5. **Has anyone forced you to do things you didn't want to do?**
6. Has anyone taken things that belong to you without your OK?

\*The authors suggest that responses to these six items from the original 12-item tool can provide a simple screening tool for elder abuse.

\*\*Bolded items are same as in H-S/East tool.

# Validation of Screening Tools

## EASI

Yaffe MJ, Wolfson C, Lithwick M, Weiss D. Development and Validation of a Tool to Improve Physician Identification of Elder Abuse: The Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (EASI). Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, 2008; 20(3):276-300.

## H-S/EAST

Neale AV, Hwalek MA, Scott RO, Sengstock MC. Validation of the Hwalek-Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Test. The Journal of Applied Gerontology, 1991; 10(4):406-418.

## VASS

Schofield MJ, Mishra GD. Validity of Self-Report Screening Scale for Elder Abuse: Women's Health Australia Study. The Gerontologist, 2003; 43(1):110-120.

# Questions for Discussion

- What tool(s), if any, do you use in practice to screen for elder abuse/neglect?
- What are the factors most important to consider when selecting a screening tool for this population?
- Will screening for elder maltreatment impact the provider-patient relationship or the quality of care provided?