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Formal Carers' Perspectives on Elder Abuse within a Maltese Care Home

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Abstract

This research explores formal caregivers' perspectives on elder abuse within a Maltese care home, addressing the challenges posed by an ageing population and the growing reliance on long-term care. The study aimed to explore (1) formal caregivers' understanding of elder abuse, risk factors that lead a person to becoming abusive, (3) how formal carers perceive the Maltese legal system safeguards the older person from elder abuse and (4) formal carers' insights into the current procedures, policies and measures with respect to elder abuse within a care home. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with six formal carers and analysed using thematic analysis, generating four main themes: (1) formal carers' perspectives on elder abuse, (2) personal and institutional challenges leading to elder abuse, the importance of cultivating skills and training for carers, and (4) empowering the older persons.

Findings revealed that formal carers indicated no instances of elder abuse within the facility, associating elder abuse primarily with verbal, emotional, or psychological harm. Participants also identified individual and institutional challenges as potential triggers for abuse and emphasized the need for education on elder abuse. Key recommendations include (1) resident empowerment, (2) future research, (3) implementation of a proposed law and (4) enhanced training for carers.