

The Committee is aware that research findings do not indicate a single cause of abuse of elderly people. They heard of the multiplicity of factors that contribute to or are associated with abuse. In order to prevent abuse of older Canadians, the Committee is convinced that focused research aimed at identifying key risk factors is needed.

The Committee recommends:

- 3. That the federal government, through the relevant existing federal bodies, provide funding for research aimed at identifying the risk factors for abuse of the elderly in order to develop more focused and targeted prevention interventions.**
- 4. That a portion of this funding be for longitudinal studies aimed at understanding risk factors. This should include studies to clarify the experience of the elderly who are victims of abuse; to determine the role of childhood factors for both the abuser and the abused in cases of abuse toward the elderly; to understand the link between abusive acts toward the elderly and other forms of violence; to expose any link between social factors such as poverty, substance abuse, unemployment, and abuse of the elderly.**

III THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

Several witnesses presented a general demographic picture in relation to older Canadians that revealed how the problem of abuse may grow as the population grows older. It was noted that: "At the present time, older people (65 years and older) represent 11% of Canada's total population. However, the number of seniors is expected to increase significantly as Canada's population demographics begin to reflect the aging of its "baby boomer" generation."³⁸ One Voice emphasized that: "Since the number of persons over age 65 is expected to double in the next 30 years, elder abuse is a problem that requires our immediate attention."³⁹

The increase in the "old old" population was seen as bringing particular problems for both older women and their female family caregivers:

³⁸ Scott, Presentation to the Sub-Committee, February 2, 1993, p. 1.

³⁹ Darrah, 2:9.