

## *Physical abuse the most common*

THE most common kind of abuse against the elderly here is physical abuse, which includes inflicting injury or even sexual offences.

The next two are neglect, such as not providing food, basic necessities or medicine; and psychological abuse, which could mean verbal abuse such as belittling or humiliating the person.

These are the results of an exploratory study presented at a health-care and ageing symposium held yesterday. The study is based on an analysis of 89 cases of substantiated abuse of the elderly as assessed by voluntary welfare organisation TRANS Centre or Safe@TRANS. The cases, involving victims aged 60 and above, were recorded between 2003 and 2008.

Conducted by Associate Professor Chan Wing Cheong from the National University of Singapore's Faculty of Law, it is one of three known local studies on this topic. Two earlier studies published in 2000 and 2008 were based on cases of abuse of the elderly seen by the emergency department at hospitals.

Other findings from Prof Chan's study include:

- Older seniors are more likely to be victims of abuse.
- Elderly women are more likely to be physically abused.
- Elderly men are more likely to be abused by their sons.

Asked about the extent of such cases, Prof Chan said: "We don't know because of under-reporting of such cases. The only thing we can say is, whatever the number is, it's going to get worse."

Prof Chan will be sourcing data for a nationwide study.