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DISCRIMINATION OF OLDER PEOPLE IN SERBIA

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Abuse of older people is a single or a repeated act or a failure to act happening in a relationship between two persons based on trust that causes pain or disturbance on the part of the older person. Red Cross of Serbia is the initiator and the founding member of Humanas (the network of 15 civil society organisations dealing with the issues of older people) and is spearheading a campaign of sensitisation of the public in relation to discrimination, neglect and abuse of older people.

HumanaS has educated volunteers in Elder Abuse and Discrimination prevention.

A survey has been done in 8 cities in Serbia polling 250 older people of both sexes, age 65 or above. The survey results demonstrate that 44% of all the polled people are familiar with the existence of abuse. Alarmingly, as high as 32% of older people have been exposed to some form of abuse, with the most frequent form being verbal abuse (11.2%) The polled older people have stressed that they hate being called names, made fun of and called stupid or illiterate, within their families as well as in the general community. As for prevention, 52% of the polled older people think that 'everybody', meaning both public and civil sector should play a role in prevention.

Conclusion: The problem of abuse of older people has to be approached from a multi-sector and multi-disciplinary perspective. The emphasis should be on new, deeper surveys, education of professionals, family members and other care takers.