**PROJECT CO-FUNDED BY EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS (ERDF)**

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**Title**: ‘Awareness raising and promotion of good practices in dealing with older people in institutions’ (Sensibilización y fomento de buenas prácticas en el trato con las personas mayores en instituciones).

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**Summary:**

Interest in elder abuse has increased in recent years. Most of the research developed so far has been carried out at the community level, and there are still gaps in knowledge regarding institutional abuse, especially in Spain. There is no statistical data available about its prevalence in our country despite the fact that there are studies that point to a significant relationship between mistreatment and institutionalisation (Marín et al., 1991). For this reason, an initiative consisting of two studies is proposed. The aim of the first one is to design, develop and validate a self-applied instrument to determine good professional practices and to detect the presence of institutional mistreatment of the elderly according to the Kayser-Jones model (1995) focused on: Depersonalisation, Dehumanisation, Victimisation and Infantilisation. Unlike other related assessment instruments, the psychometric properties of this one will be provided and both explicit mistreatment (physical, psychological, sexual, economic and neglect) and subtle mistreatment (depersonalisation, dehumanisation, infantilisation), often ignored, will be assessed.

While research has focused on explicit mistreatment in the academic field, the Voces Ausentes study (2002) pointed out that elderly considered subtle elements a more harmful type of mistreatment. The test will be carried out with professionals in participating institutions. For this purpose, an item bank will be developed from existing literature on instruments used in institutions, and DSM-5 indicators and criteria for mistreatment by a person other than a spouse or partner. The scale will be reviewed by a group of experts in the field of gerontology and mistreatment.

Based on their suggestions, relevant modifications will be introduced and a pilot study (n=20) will be initiated. Afterwards, a study at the national level will be carry out to validate the scale (n=300). Its use will allow to analyse the prevalence of institutional mistreatment in Spain for the first time. Moreover, the relation between mistreatment and variables associated with the professional, the elderly and the situation context will be analysed. Based on the variables that show correlation with mistreatment, a second project will be carried out. It will focus on the design, establishment and assessment of the efficiency of a programme aimed at the prevention and intervention against mistreatment in institutions, which would be the first of its kind in Spain.

This project will contribute to a better knowledge of the difficulties, as well as the factors involved in the appearance of mistreatment in institutions. Additionally, it will help promote the wellbeing and good practice directly in formal carers and, indirectly, in the receptors of such care.

It is important to mention the viability and applicability of this project, as it has the support of relevant institutions of our country (which reflects its importance). This shows not only that they are aware of the presence of this situation and of the existing knowledge gap, but also, and more importantly, of the need for professionals to learn how to detect situations of abuse and to have the tools to prevent them.