

Cases of elderly abuse by kin up 12%: survey

Kyodo News

Authorities confirmed 14,889 cases of abuse committed by relatives against people aged 65 or older in fiscal 2008, up 12.2 percent from a year before, a Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry survey showed Friday.

The number of victims totaled 15,293, of which 6,897 were suffering from dementia requiring nursing care. Some 78 percent of victims were women, the ministry said.

According to the survey, 40.2 percent of the abusers were the victims' sons, followed by their husbands at 17.3 percent, daughters at 15.1 percent and daughters-in-law at 8.5 percent.

As for types of abuse, 63.6 percent of cases involved physical abuse, followed by psychological abuse including verbal attacks at 38.0 percent, negligence at 27.0 percent and financial abuse, such as taking the victims' money, at 25.7 percent.

A ministry official assumed that the number of cases has increased partly due to "raised awareness" about reporting elderly abuse cases to local governments.

The survey, started in fiscal 2006, was taken on 1,800 municipalities and all 47 prefectures based on a law aiming at preventing elderly abuse.

It also revealed that the number of cases in which victims were abused by employees of nursing-care facilities also grew to 70 in fiscal 2008, up 12.9 percent from the previous year.

The number of victims who died after being abused by family members was down to 24, three less than the figure reported in fiscal 2007.

Of the 24 who died, 10 were murdered, five died from neglect, two were killed in murder-suicides, another two died from abuse and five died from other causes.

Meanwhile, the total number of reports of abuse received by local authorities or calls seeking consultations on elderly abuse by relatives increased to 21,692 in fiscal 2008, up 8.6 percent from the previous year.

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