

# International Conference on Geriatrics & Gerontology

July 08-10, 2014 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Chicago-North Shore Conference Center, USA

## Disrespect: Elder abuse in Indian country

Jacqueline S Gray

University of North Dakota, USA

The culture in Indian country passed down through generations is to value, respect, and honor elders for they are the teachers of our people. However, there seems to be more and more reports of elder abuse of various types throughout Indian country. Increasing incidents related to physical, emotional/psychological, sexual abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation are becoming common place. The purpose of this presentation is to outline the various types of elder abuse and how it is viewed within Indian country. Comparisons will be made between legal definitions of various types of elder abuse, definitions by tribal courts and judges, and definitions by tribal elders themselves. The aspect of spiritual abuse will be discussed and the need for spiritual abuse as a legal type of abuse. Issues such as not wanting to involve law enforcement or the courts, cross jurisdictional issues, and lack of tribal codes addressing elder abuse are important factors. Elder abuse is a major problem in Indian country. Legal and punitive approaches to elder abuse are not working. There are major differences in legal definitions versus interpretation by tribal judges and courts versus the interpretation by indigenous elders. These differences indicate a great need for awareness programs and research to address the incidence and issues related to elder abuse in Indian country.

### Biography

Jacqueline S Gray, a Choctaw/Cherokee research Associate professor at the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota, is director of the Seven Generations Center of Excellence in Native Behavioral Health and Associate Director of the Center for Rural Health Indigenous Programs at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. She is also director of the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) that was funded in the fall of 2011 to address the issues of Elder Abuse in Indian Country. She has worked addressing health, mental health and health disparities across Indian Country. Her work focuses on mental health in Indian Country. She has worked with tribes across the U.S. for over 30 years. She received her doctorate from Oklahoma State University in 1998 and has been at the University of North Dakota since 1999.

[jacqueline.gray@med.und.edu](mailto:jacqueline.gray@med.und.edu)