

## Scoping review: Neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members

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### ABSTRACT

Neglect of the elderly in the context of a global aging population is of concern, more so neglect caused to the elderly by nuclear family members. However, the literature on the subject of neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members has yet to be mapped out to afford academics insight into future research directions on the subject. Therefore, a scoping review guided by the PRISMA-ScR checklist was undertaken and mapped out the relevant literature, identified gaps and made suggestions on the subject of neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members. To gain a wider range of possible sources of evidence, the Thai Journals Online (ThaiJO) and China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) were searched in tandem with the English-Language based Wiley Online Library and ScienceDirect databases. The databases were searched for academic articles published between July 2011 and mid-July 2021. The screening process reduced the initial 975 articles found to 15 sources of evidence. The content of these 15 sources of evidence was mapped out and synthesized via a charting table. Gaps identified include how and why physical necessities are withheld from the elderly; how financial restraints on the elderly by nuclear family members occur; the interplay between finances and neglect; how stress levels, family dynamics, family history and living conditions exacerbate psychological neglect; and, a needed exploration of the forms of verbal neglect perpetrated on the elderly by nuclear family members. Suggestions for future research based on these identified gaps were discussed and offered in this manuscript.

### Key words:

scoping review; neglect of the elderly; nuclear family members

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## INTRODUCTION

The neglect inflicted upon the elderly members of the society is a social phenomenon of concern<sup>1,2,3</sup>. This is partially due to the growing aging population globally, the reduction in employable persons who can offer care and aid to the elderly as well as the potentially heavy toll that an aging population will have on health systems – all essential components in addressing, intervening and reducing incidents of neglect perpetrated upon the elderly. The extant academic literature indicates that neglect of the elderly is porous and has interdependent predictors as well as associated risk factors. Among these interdependent factors are the overall physical and mental health of the elderly, the living conditions of the elderly (whether they live alone or if they live with family members), their level of mental cognitive ability as well as successful resources for interventions by relevant stakeholders<sup>4-8</sup>. Neglect of elderly persons can be categorized as physical (punching, beating, use of objects to inflict physical harm)<sup>9-12</sup>, verbal (scolding, blaming, berating)<sup>13,14</sup>, financial (withholding of finances, swindling the elderly of their income/savings)<sup>4,14</sup> and psychological (blaming the elderly for their infirmity or frailty, withholding of emotional support and/or affection, refusing to provide communication and conversation with the elderly)<sup>6,13,15,16</sup> neglect. These forms of neglect are perpetrated on the elderly based on the mental health and well-being of informal caregivers, physical health of informal caregivers, educational level of informal caregivers and the security of employment/finances of informal caregivers. Additionally, the cultural contexts in which these families live as well as the social norms governing privacy and non-intrusion into family affairs sometimes exacerbate the acceptability or normativity

of neglect perpetrated upon elderly family members<sup>7,9,10,11,12,15,17,19</sup>.

Past scoping reviews on the subject of elderly neglect have focused on different areas of elderly neglect. For example, hospital-based elderly abuse intervention where medical staff either witness or possibly perpetrate neglect<sup>20</sup> and abuse of the elderly in emergency department settings where medical staff are the first to deal with injuries experienced by the elderly and have to ascertain if the injury was due to an accident or was inflicted upon the elderly<sup>21</sup>. Other studies on the neglect of the elderly have studied rurality and elderly abuse where due to living in a rural area the neglect inflicted upon the elderly goes unnoticed, is ignored or the elderly have no options to seek redress for the neglect they experience<sup>22</sup>; and resident-to-resident abuse in long-term care facilities for the elderly where abuse is perpetrated by and upon the elderly residents<sup>23</sup>. However, none of these past scoping reviews have specifically addressed the neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members in the social sciences disciplines, although the scoping review on abuse of the elderly in emergency departments and rurality touched on the subject obliquely.

A preliminary search by the authors in the relevant international databases had found that no scoping review had been conducted on the subject of neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members. This signaled a need for this lapse in the current literature on the subject to be addressed, thus arguably adding value to academic work on this specific topic. Additionally, the current literature on the subject of elderly neglect by nuclear family members has also not been mapped out and analyzed to identify who the family members involved in the neglect of the elderly are. As such, the subject of neglect of the elderly by their immediate family members requires more extensive research that is based on identified gaps in the present literature.

**Research focus and objectives**

This scoping review was undertaken with the objective of mapping out the relevant social sciences literature on the subject of the neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members. The authors were also cognizant of the possibility that different nuclear family members may neglect the elderly in different ways and this has been taken into account in the mapping out of the relevant literature. Upon completion of the mapping, the finalized literature is analyzed, and future research directions are proposed<sup>24</sup>. The authors have used the first five stages of Arksey and O'Malley's stages of a scoping review, namely: identifying the research question, identifying relevant studies, study selection, charting the data and finally collating, summarizing and reporting the results<sup>25</sup>. The authors also used the works of Levac et al.<sup>26</sup>, Munn et al.<sup>27</sup>, Pham et al.<sup>28</sup> and Peters et al.<sup>29</sup> to aid in maintaining the research focus and systematic approach of this scoping review.

**Scope of the review and definitions**

The population of focus is the elderly and their nuclear family members. No extended family members such as cousins or distant relatives or friends/neighbors who are considered family are taken into consideration within the parameters of this scoping review. The elderly refers to individuals above the age of 65<sup>30</sup> and only academic articles that have respondents/participants in that age range or if the mean age of the respondents/participants is 65 and above are utilized for this scoping review. This forms the population, concept and context (PCC) of this research, namely: the elderly being the population, neglect being the concept, and neglect by nuclear family members being the context.

This scoping review will use the physical, verbal, financial and psychological aspects of neglect as found in the works of Chaurasia and Srivatsava<sup>9</sup>, Altendorf et al.<sup>10</sup>, Clarysse et al.<sup>11</sup>, Lee et

al.<sup>12</sup>, Pourghane et al.<sup>13</sup>, Zhang et al.<sup>14</sup>, Mohd Mydin and Othman<sup>31</sup>, Fulmer et al.<sup>6</sup> and Peshevska et al.<sup>15,16</sup> as a basis for analysis of the scoped literature. Additionally, only academic literature based on empirical data is utilized. Grey literature (editorials, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, reflective pieces, annual reports) are excluded.

**METHODS****Protocol registration and eligibility criteria**

The methodology adopted by this scoping review is the PRISMA-ScR by Tricco et al.<sup>32</sup>. No review protocol for this specific topic has been registered by the authors. The literature is not limited to any geographic region or country; the timeframe selected for the publication of the articles is between July 2011 and mid-July 2021 to allow the authors to have the most relevant and accurate academic information in the published literature on the subject of neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members, as well as to make this scoping review as current as possible within the context of the growing body of academic literature. The languages of publication are the English, Thai and Chinese Languages. These languages are chosen to provide a wider range of possible sources of evidence and this effort was aided by the proficiency of the authors in these languages. Only academic articles based on empirical data are included in this scoping review. All grey literature is excluded.

**Information sources**

The scoping review is conducted using the Wiley Online Library, ScienceDirect, China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and Thai Journals Online (ThaiJO) databases. The date of the most recent search on all databases is 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

**Search strategy**

The keywords used for the database searches are: the elderly, senior citizen, the aged, older people, older adult, the old, neglect, physical neglect, verbal neglect,

financial neglect, psychological neglect, family, nuclear family, spouse, son, step-son, daughter, step-daughter, adopted son, adopted daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, child, and grandchild. It is noted that other keywords normally associated with neglect, for example home-based violence, are left out of the keyword search on

purpose. This is to enable the authors to efficiently capture academic literature that deals specifically with neglect. In all database searches, Boolean operators are used. All authors are involved in the database searches dependent upon language proficiency. Table 1 below illustrates the search strategy used for this scoping review

**Table 1.** Search strategy

<b>Database</b>	Wiley Online Library, ScienceDirect. Thai Online Journals (ThaiJO) and China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI)
<b>Other sources</b>	None
<b>Key searched terms</b>	<the elderly>, <senior citizen>, <the aged>, <older people>, <older adult>, <the old>, <neglect>, <physical neglect>, <verbal neglect>, <financial neglect>, <psychological neglect>, <family>, <nuclear family>, <spouse>, <son>, <step-son>, <adopted son>, <son-in-law>, <daughter>, <step-daughter>, <adopted daughter>, <daughter-in-law>, <child> and <grandchild>
<b>Language</b>	English, Thai and Chinese Languages
<b>Location</b>	Globally
<b>Duration</b>	July 2011 – mid-July 2021
<b>Types of study</b>	Empirical studies
<b>Type of publication</b>	Research articles
<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	Editorials, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, reflective pieces, annual reports

### *Selection of sources of evidence*

The process of selecting the sources of evidence is based on four rounds of screening. The first round of screening excludes articles that are not relevant to the database searches. The second round of screening is based on the removal of duplicate articles. The third round of screening focuses on the title and abstract – indicating fitness with the topic of the scoping review. The fourth round of screening is based on the focus of the content of the article and the assessment that the article provides the information/data necessary for the purpose of the scoping review. All the authors are involved in the selection of the sources of evidence.

### *Data charting process*

To minimize personal, professional or academic specialization bias, all finalized articles are read by all the authors. This step in the data charting process is conducted to ascertain the relevance of each finalized article to this scoping review. Upon confirmation of the relevance of the finalized articles, data extraction and charting are done individually and independently using a charting table. The template of this charting table is shown in Table 2 below. A further explanation of the data charting process is explained in the section on the synthesis of the results.

**Table 2.** Charting table

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
1												
2												
3												

The charting table focused on the methodologies, subject matter, types of neglect (physical, verbal, financial, psychological) as well as nuclear family members who perpetrate types of neglect.

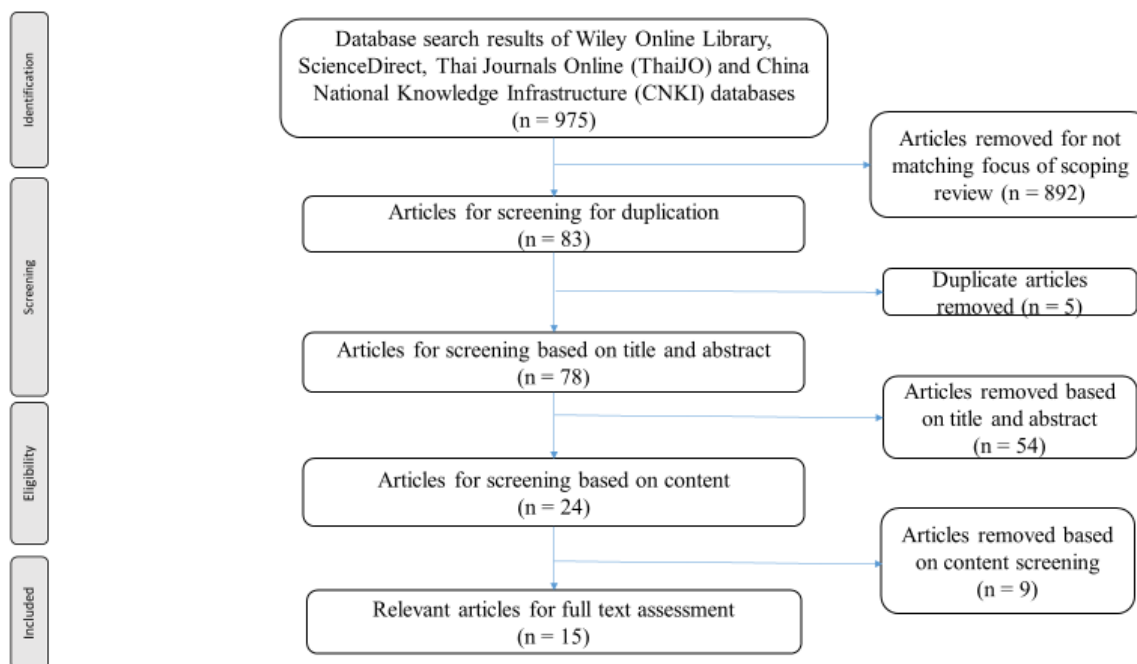
### ***Synthesis of results***

The authors summarized all data deemed relevant into the designated cells in their individual charting tables. Each individual charting table is collated by the lead author into one main charting table. The lead author then removes all repetitive data. The remaining relevant data is summarized, synthesized and analyzed by the lead author. No cultural context was used in the analysis and synthesis of the data as cultural differences in the neglect of the elderly by their immediate family members are not the focus of this manuscript. The results of the data mapping are presented below.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Selection of sources of evidence***

A total of 975 articles were found in the database search. In the first round of screening, out of these 975 articles a total of 83 articles were identified as potential matches for the purposes of the scoping review. In the second round of screening, of these 83 articles five duplicates are removed leaving a total of 78 articles for selection based on title and abstract. In the third round of screening, of these 78 articles a total of 54 were removed as the title and abstract indicated that the content of the articles was not relevant to the focus of the scoping review (e.g. the caregivers were not family members, the articles focused on medical staff who provide healthcare for the elderly in the Emergency Room of a hospital, or that the elderly as defined in the articles were aged 45 and above), leaving a total of 24 articles for assessment based on content of the article. In the fourth round of screening, out of the 24 articles a total of nine articles were removed. Some of the reasons for removing these articles include the article not being focused on nuclear family members; the content was focused on educating medical staff, and the evaluation of testing instruments. Other reasons for exclusion of these articles include the focus was the extent of mental health issues of family caregivers, the general demographic information of neglected elderly persons, and the articles were literature reviews or systematic reviews that did not match the focus of this scoping review. This left a total of 15 articles to be finalized as eligible articles for the scoping review. Figure 1 below illustrates the selection of the sources of evidence using the PRISMA ScR protocols espoused by Tricco et al.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 1.** PRISMA ScR flowchart of the selection of sources of evidence

### ***Characteristics of sources of evidence***

The included articles were from China (n = 5), the USA (n = 2), Portugal (n = 2), Canada (n = 1), Iran (n = 1), India (n = 1), South Africa (n = 1), Australia (n = 1) and Thailand (n = 1). The methodologies used in the included articles were a quantitative approach (n = 4), quantitative cross sectional design (n = 1), mixed methods (n = 3), qualitative (n = 1), qualitative design with phenomenological approach (n = 2), qualitative approach with a focus on social and psychological realities (n = 1), qualitative ethnography (n = 1), qualitative approach using interpretive epistemology informed by phenomenology and interpretivism (n = 1) and descriptive qualitative study (n = 1).

Sampling was conducted in the included articles using random selection (n = 3), purposive sampling (n = 3), convenience sampling (n = 1), purposive sampling mixed with non-probabilistic sampling (n = 1), purposive objective sampling (n = 1), snowball technique coupled with the judgment method (n = 1), quota sampling (n = 1), non-representative convenience sampling (n = 1), key

informant interviews (n = 1) and two articles did not specify the sampling technique used (n = 2).

Data collection was carried out using several routes, namely: semi-structured in-depth interviews (n = 2), face-to-face interviews (n = 2), door-to-door interviews (n = 1), retrospective univariate analysis of forensic medical reports (n = 1), via partner community agencies, leaflet distribution and snowball technique (n = 1) and questionnaire administered along with face-to-face interviews (n = 1). Other routes used by the included articles were ethnographic fieldwork and correspondence (n = 1), narrative approach (n = 1), researcher administered questionnaire (n = 1), case study (n = 1), potential respondents were approached individually (n = 1) and one article did not specify the data collection method used (n = 1).

Among the research tools used in the included articles were semi-structured in-depth interview guidelines, researcher administered face-to-face questionnaire, open-ended interview question guideline, survey questionnaire and interview, data

extraction, self-administered questionnaire, interviews and correspondence, detailed question guideline, survey, categorization of qualitative data with checking by key informants and one article did not specify the research tool utilized in the study.

Several data analysis tools were used in the included articles. Among these were logistic regression analysis and Mplus 6.11 using the full-information maximum likelihood approach, SPSS version 21.0, descriptive statistics, and ANOVA and post-hoc Turkey test. Also among the data analysis tools used were thematic analysis using Colaizzi's phenomenology method (eidetic approach), a descriptive methodology and NVIVO 9 software. Finally, the included articles also used data analysis tools such as the constant comparative method of Grounded Theory approach, qualitative ethnographic analysis, statistical analysis using STATA (version 12) for descriptive analysis, Pearson's chi-square test or Fisher's exact test and T-test and one-way ANOVA. Two articles did not specify the data analysis method used.

The subject matters in the included articles were the prevalence of abuse and neglect among migrant populations residing in low income racial and ethnic minority neighborhoods, the promotion of improved knowledge of domestic violence experienced by the elderly with disabilities, the exploration of perceptions of risk factors for elder abuse among older immigrants, the loneliness of abused elderly persons as well as the impact of outmigration of youth from rural areas on the traditional old-age support system. The included articles also covered subject matters such as the improvement of the spiritual life of the elderly, the impact of the transformation of family structures on the perceived wellbeing of the elderly, the cultural contexts on the perceptions of the elderly on mistreatment and neglect, elder neglect in the context of human rights

violations and the emotions of the elderly who experience neglect and their associations with individual and abuse event characteristics. Finally, the included articles also covered subject matters such as the testing of the matrilineal advantage theory among grandparents, the factors that influence the mental health of retired elderly persons, the nature and prevention of abuse/neglect among the elderly, the examination of the feelings/attitudes of the elderly towards pensions and assisting widows to be able to manage crises in the future.

The diversity of the characteristics (location of research, research design, research tools and data analysis tools) of the sources of evidence, rigor practiced in conducting the database searches as well as depth/breadth covered on the subject of the neglect of the elderly by their immediate family members in the sources of evidence indicates that the data collected have met the focus of this scoping review; and therefore the synthesis of the results is possible.

### ***Synthesis of results***

From the 15 included articles, physical neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members could range from the common to the more severe<sup>33,34,35</sup> and was best characterized as the deprivation of basic necessities<sup>36</sup>. The most commonly reported deprivation was housing<sup>37,38,39</sup> although other forms of neglect included poor nutrition (withholding of food), withholding of medication and withholding of other health needs<sup>12,37,38,39,40</sup>. Physical neglect may be perpetrated by partners, children or grandchildren of either sex.<sup>34,35,36,39,40</sup> but, the data extraction indicated that children were most commonly found to be the perpetrators of physical neglect of the elderly<sup>12,34,36,37,38,39,41</sup>.

It was also found that physical neglect was connected to financial dependence on children and occurred



concurrently.<sup>40,41</sup> Such financial dependence characterized the financial neglect experienced by the elderly in the included articles<sup>38,42</sup> as did monetary exploitation, swindling and demands for money from nuclear family members.<sup>33,35,39</sup> Low to no financial assistance from children was also a form of financial neglect<sup>12,34</sup> that led to financial constraints and instability faced by the elderly<sup>37,43</sup>. Financial neglect was, based on the data extraction, perpetrated by children<sup>12,34,35,38,40,41,43</sup>, grandchildren<sup>35,36,38</sup> and sometimes either the daughter-in-law<sup>42</sup> or the son-in-law<sup>39</sup>.

Psychological neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members in the 15 included articles were exemplified by isolation<sup>12,33,34,36,39,41,42</sup> that included estrangement<sup>44</sup>; loneliness<sup>34,42,45,46</sup> and being ignored<sup>12,37,38</sup>; as well as emotional distance from children<sup>36</sup>. Psychological neglect also took the form of the withholding of affection, humiliation and

defamation<sup>40</sup> and the feelings of fear and sadness<sup>38,46</sup> as well as withdrawing within themselves and irritability<sup>45</sup> among the elderly. Two included articles reported that psychological neglect possibly stemmed from a reduction of filial piety<sup>37,43</sup>. Psychological neglect was most often enacted on the elderly by male family members<sup>36,40</sup>, children, children-in-law or grandchildren<sup>12,34,37,38,39,42,43,44,45,46</sup>.

There was only one article that reported verbal neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members<sup>39</sup> and this reported incidence was enacted by the son and daughter-in-law. The authors therefore question if this is due to the authors' stringent definition of verbal neglect based on the background literature, or, if the extant academic literature has yet to be more inclusive of this particular type of neglect of the elderly by their family members. The mapping, analysis and synthesis of the included sources of evidence are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Mapping, analysis and synthesis

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
1	DeLiema M, Gassoumis ZD, Homeier DC, Wilber KH. Determining prevalence and correlates of elder abuse using promotores: Low-income immigrant Latinos report high rates of abuse and neglect. Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. 2012;60(7): 1333-1339.	USA	<b>Methodology:</b> Quantitative <b>Sampling:</b> Randomly selected census tracts using face-to-face recruitment in low-income Latino communities to achieve a total of 200 (n = 200) respondents with a response rate of 65%. <b>Data collection:</b> Door-to-door interviews conducted by <i>promotores</i> (Spanish speaking local residents). <b>Research Tool:</b> A 63-item abuse instrument developed for the research including questions derived from the Revised Conflict Tactic Scales and the Conflict Tactics Scales for Older Adults. These	The study aimed to study the prevalence of abuse and neglect among Spanish-speaking Latinos aged 65 and older and residing in predominantly low-income, racial and ethnic minority neighborhoods in Los Angeles.	Low-income Latino immigrant community, Spanish-speaking aged 66 and above as the research focused on reported neglect in the last 12 months.	10.7% reported physical neglect, with half reporting severe physical neglect.	Within the family, family caregiver.			16.7% reported financial neglect and 10.6% reported severe financial neglect and exploitation.	Family caregiver.	Isolation was reported among the respondents. Specifically, 24.8% reported psychological abuse and 10.6% reported severe psychological abuse.	Within the family, family caregiver.

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			items were translated from the English Language to Spanish and administered via a researcher administered face-to-face questionnaire. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> Logistic regression analysis and Mplus 6.11 using the full-information maximum likelihood approach.										
2	Frazão SL, Silva MS, Norton P, Magalhães T. Domestic violence against elderly with disability Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine. 2014; 28: 19-24.	Portugal	<b>Methodology:</b> Quantitative <b>Sampling:</b> Purposive sampling where 70 clinical forensic medical reports were selected from 1278 reports made between 2005 and 2013 based on pre-determined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Sampling was divided into moderate and	This study aimed to promote improved knowledge about some demographic and forensic characteristics of domestic violence against elderly people who have physical/mental disabilities.	Elderly persons with moderate or severe disability.	Physical, nutritional, hygiene, withholding of medication, withholding of healthcare, rest and housing (n = 41)	Predominantly male partner or children			Financial and physical neglect often occurred simultaneously (n = 2).		Withholding of affection, insults, humiliation, defamation and threatened aggression (n = 23)	Predominantly male partner or children

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			severe neglect groups. <b>Data collection:</b> Retrospective univariate analysis of clinical forensic medical reports. <b>Research tool:</b> Data extraction but the specific tool remains unclear. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> SPSS version 21.0										
3	Guruge S, Sidani S, Man G, Matsuoka A, Kanthasamy P, Leung E. Elder abuse risk factors: Perceptions among older Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, and Tamil immigrants in Toronto. Journal of Migration and Health. 2021;4: 100059.	Canada	<b>Methodology:</b> Cross-sectional quantitative study <b>Sampling:</b> Convenience sampling of (n = 173) participants from immigrant communities within the city of Toronto between the years 2017 – 2019. <b>Data collection:</b> Conducted using partnering community agencies, leaflet distribution and the snowball technique.	Exploration of perceptions of risk factors for elder abuse among older immigrants as a means for designing effective interventions.  An ecosystemic framework and intersectionality lens were used as the theoretical foundation for this study.	Newcomer Chinese, Korean, Punjabi and Tamil migrants.	Chinese respondents perceived physical neglect as high.	Physical neglect risk was connected to financial dependence on children.			Financial dependence was perceived as a high risk of abuse by Chinese and Tamil elderly immigrants.	Risk was from financial dependence on children.	Punjabi and Korean respondents perceived isolation (psychological neglect) as high.	Social isolation risk was due to dependence on children.

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			<b>Research tool:</b> Self-administered questionnaire translated into four languages that are native to the four immigrant communities, questionnaire was designed by reviewing 4454 quantitative and qualitative studies. A pilot study was conducted on five older adults. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> Descriptive statistics, ANOVA and post-hoc Turkey test.										
4	He C, Ye J. Lonely sunsets: Impacts of rural–urban migration on the left-behind elderly in rural China. Population, Space and Place. 2014; 20(4): 352-369.	China	<b>Methodology:</b> Mixed methods (questionnaire survey and interviews with related actors) based on the findings of a study conducted by the College of Humanities and Development Studies of China Agricultural University. A	Examines of how the outmigration of rural youth shapes the situation of their elderly family members and analyzes the consequences of the rural-urban migration on the old-age support system.	Rural communities of left-behind elderly persons in ten villages.	Physical neglect due to the absence of children who have migrated to cities for employment; as well as neglect from children in the rural area who focus on agricultural production.	Children, both sons and daughters as well as their spouses.			Low to none financial assistance from children that offers little change from previous financial situations.	Children.	Lack of connection with children due to being unable to afford payments attached to telephone calls.  Isolation due to infrequent visits from children who have migrated to urban areas (also known as	Children.

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			sociological approach was taken in this study. The study was conducted between 2006 – 2008). <b>Sampling:</b> Data was collected using the snowball technique and judgement method from five selected provinces in China where youth outmigration was high. Total sample was 400 left behind elderly and 156 non-left behind elderly. <b>Data collection:</b> N/A <b>Research tool:</b> Survey questionnaire and interviews. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> N/A									“empty nest syndrome”).  Loneliness is also reported among the respondents.	
5	Heravi-Karimooi M, Rejeh N, Foroughan M, Vaismoradi M. Experience of loneliness in Iranian abused elders. International Nursing	Iran	<b>Methodology:</b> Qualitative design with a phenomenological approach.	This study focused on the loneliness of abused elderly people.	Elderly volunteers in social clubs and healthcare centers.	Deprivation of necessities and rejection by husband.	Male spouse and sons			Financial neglect.	Grandchildren	Isolation and loneliness, an emotional gap with children despite living in the same home.	Male spouse, children, children-in-law,

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
	Review. 2012;59(1): 139-145.		<p><b>Sampling:</b> Purposive sampling with pre-set inclusion and exclusion criteria of 14 elderly persons (n = 14).</p> <p><b>Data collection:</b> Semi-structured in-depth interviews (2-3 rounds) in the homes of the respondents between the years 2008 - 2009.</p> <p><b>Research tool:</b> Semi-structured in-depth interview guideline with probing questions based on Iranian Domestic Elder Abuse questionnaire and University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale and Abbreviated Mental Test Score. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analyzed concurrently.</p>									Psychological threat.	grandchildren.

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			<b>Data analysis tool:</b> Themes were identified using Colaizzi's phenomenology method (eidetic method) and described. Trustworthiness of data were tested using the framework by Lincoln and Guba.										
6	Hu C, Li Q, Hu M, Yang Q, Ran Q, Dong X. Prominent problems in the spiritual and cultural life of the elderly in west China: Based on a questionnaire survey in 77 cities. Journal of Dali University. 2020;2096-2266	China	<b>Methodology:</b> Quantitative <b>Sampling:</b> Random sampling with (n = 2794) participants. <b>Data collection:</b> Questionnaire survey administered along with face-to-face interviews. <b>Research tool:</b> Sample questionnaire and interview survey. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> Unspecified descriptive methodology.	This paper focuses on the summary and analysis of the problems existing in the spiritual and cultural life of the elderly in western cities, so as to better solve these problems, promote the development of the cause of aging, enrich the spiritual and cultural life of the elderly, improve the quality of spiritual life	Elderly in western cities in China.	Neglect in the form of poor living conditions (housing).	Children.			Reported financial constraints by the elderly.		Poor mental health conditions. Ignoring the elderly by refusing to communicate with them. There is also a reported drop in terms of filial piety.	Son or daughter.



No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
				and increase the happiness of the elderly.									
7	Jothikaran TAJ, Meershoek A, Ashok L, Krumeich A. Older adults in traditional and modern living arrangements in southern India: The importance of maintaining a sense of belonging and positive intergenerational exchanges. Journal of Aging Studies. 2020;54: 100867.	India	<b>Methodology:</b> Qualitative approach that focused on social and psychological realities. <b>Sampling:</b> Purposive sampling with pre-set criteria (n = 26), (14 women and 12 men). <b>Data collection:</b> Potential respondents were approached individually and informed of the purpose of the study and consent was received by the researchers. <b>Research tool:</b> A semi-structured interview guide grounded in academic literature. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> NVIVO 9 software was used to encode the data.	This study examines how the transformation in family structures has impacted the perceived wellbeing of the elderly and the changes in quality of life brought on by modern developments.	Elderly in Tamil Nadu and Telanggana who lived in traditional and modern living arrangements.					Demand for financial aid from nuclear family members.	Daughter-in-law.  Loneliness and isolation from family, being ignored by family members and being left out of the family network.  Expressed wish to live apart from elderly parents.	Children, daughter-in-law, grandchildren,	
8	Lee HY, Gibson P, Chaisson R. Elderly Korean immigrants'	USA	<b>Methodology:</b> Mixed-methods approach.	This research is part of a larger study	Elderly immigrants.	Actively ignoring their	Children.			Not receiving any sort of financial	Children	Ignoring or indifference towards the	Children.

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
	socially and culturally constructed definitions of elder neglect. Journal of Aging Studies. 2011; 25(2): 126-134.		<b>Sampling:</b> Quota-sampling strategy with pre-set criteria using various social organizations (n = 124). <b>Data collection:</b> Face-to-face interviews using a vignette approach. <b>Research tool:</b> Open-ended interview questions administered face-to-face. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, translated from the Korean Language to the English Language and reviewed by the first author. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> Data was analyzed using the constant comparative method approach of Grounded Theory.	conducted on the subject of the influence of social and cultural contexts on the perceptions of elderly people on elderly mistreatment and neglect.		physical needs.  Not attending to or being inattentive to the elders when they are ill.				assistance (allowance) from their children.		elderly by family, as well as feeling unappreciated.  Exclusion or isolation of the elderly from the family.	
9	Rice K. Rights and responsibilities in rural South Africa:	South Africa	<b>Methodology:</b> Qualitative anthropological	Using examples of elder neglect and young	Elderly members of	Not providing care for the elders.	Young women in the family.			Families are dependent on the pensions of	Children and grandchildren.		

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
	implications for gender, generation, and personhood. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. 2017;23(1): 28-41.		approach focusing on ethnography. <b>Sampling:</b> Unclear but based on a rural coastal village of approximately 830 people who self-identify as ethnically Bomvana. <b>Data collection:</b> Ethnographic fieldwork and continued correspondence. <b>Research tool:</b> Interviews and correspondence. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> Qualitative ethnographic analysis founded on cultural perceptions of rights and human rights.	men's accusations of human rights violations, the article examines the tension between rights and human rights in gendered and generational contexts.	the ethnic Bomvana.					the elderly, creating financial strain for the elderly folk.			
10	Santos AJ., Nunes B., Kislaya I, Gil AP, Ribeiro O. Older adults' emotional reactions to elder abuse: Individual and victimisation determinants. Health & Social Care in the Community. 2019;27(3): 609-620.	Portugal	<b>Methodology:</b> Mixed-methods approach using both cross-sectional quantitative study based on data from the Aging and Violence Project and face-to-face interviews conducted	Describes the emotions of community-dwelling elderly who experience abuse and their associations with individual and abuse event characteristics.	Community-dwelling older persons.	Physical neglect through limiting access to the household as well as other physical manifestations of neglect was reported by	Spouses, partners (48%), children and/or grandchildren (42%).			Financial neglect was reported by 48% of respondents.	Spouses, partners (48%), children and/or grandchildren (42%).	Psychological neglect was reported to be as high as 70% in the data. Fear and sadness were the most common type of psychological neglect outcome (34% and 33% respectively).	Spouses, partners (48%), children and/or grandchildren (42%).

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			<p>between 2011 - 2013.</p> <p><b>Sampling:</b> Purposive convenience sampling (n = 510), pilot study was conducted on 96 elderly people. Non-probabilistic sampling was also conducted.</p> <p><b>Data collection:</b> Elders who met the pre-set criteria were approached to participate in the research (n = 510). Data was collected using face-to-face interviews</p> <p><b>Research tool:</b> Survey based on New York Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, the Katz Daily Living (ADL) and five-item Geriatric Depression Scale.</p> <p><b>Data analysis tool:</b> Statistical analysis using STATA (version 12) for descriptive analysis,</p>			88% of the sample.						Ignoring the elderly was also recorded in the data.	

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			Pearson's chi-square test or Fisher's exact test.										
11	Sims M, Rofail M. The experiences of grandparents who have limited or no contact with their grandchildren. <i>Journal of Aging Studies</i> . 2013;27(4): 377-386.	Australia	<b>Methodology:</b> Qualitative approach using interpretive epistemology informed by phenomenology and interpretivism. <b>Sampling:</b> Non-representative convenience sampling with pre-set criteria, snowball technique. Total respondents was (n = 38). <b>Data collection:</b> Narrative approach allowed the respondents to respond in writing (n = 7), via phone call (n = 30) or face-to-face interview (n = 1). <b>Research tool:</b> Detailed question guideline administered in writing, in a phone interview or a face-to-face interview.	The research sought to test the matrilineal advantage theory in grandparent – grandchild estrangement to enhance and support practice for those working in family mediation or family support.	Grandparents who represent the wide diversity of Australian grandparents.							No contact or limited contact with either children or grandchildren due to estrangement/exclusion.	Children or grandchildren.

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			<b>Data analysis tool:</b> Data were transcribed and analyzed using the constant comparison approach of Grounded Theory for emergent themes.										
12	Wang H, Jiang Y. Study on mental health status of the elderly retired in western cities. Journal of Hubei Correspondence University. 2015;28(7): 91-92.	China	<b>Methodology:</b> Quantitative. <b>Sampling:</b> Random sampling (n = 126). <b>Data collection:</b> Researcher administered questionnaire. <b>Research tool:</b> Questionnaire <b>Data analysis tool:</b> T-test and one-way ANOVA.	To study the influence factors of mental health status of the elderly retired research.	Retired elders in western cities in China.							Unhealthy family atmosphere creating disharmonious parent-child relationship; as well as the elderly experiencing loneliness, withdrawing within themselves and irritability.	Son and daughter
13	Whangmahaporn P. Thai Elder Abuse Problems and Prevention. International Journal of Crime, Law and Social Issues. 2019;6(2): 46-56	Thailand	<b>Methodology:</b> Descriptive qualitative study. <b>Sampling:</b> Key informants were selected based on data saturation from nine social development centers for old people and from	The aims of this study were to study the nature of abuse by Thai elders, the causes of the abuse and the prevention of elder abuse.	Elderly persons living involved in social development centers and living in old age homes.	Being ejected from residence and experiencing some form of physical neglect.	Daughter.	Being scolded, verbally threatened with violence.	Son.	Not receiving financial support.  Being swindled and threatened for money.	Sibling.  Daughter and son-in-law.	Isolation from family.	Son and daughter-in-law.

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			old age homes. Total elderly respondents (n = 28). <b>Data collection:</b> In-depth interview method. <b>Research tool:</b> Open ended interview questions in an interview guideline. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and classified (categorized), then checked with the key informants for accuracy before conclusions were drawn.										
14	Yang Z, Zhou Y, Tang Q, Jiang L, Yuan L. Qualitative study on pension confusion of the rural elders. Chinese Central Practice Nursing. 2016;14(26): 2704-2707.	China	<b>Methodology:</b> Qualitative with a phenomenological approach. <b>Sampling:</b> Purposive objective sampling (n = 8) rural elderly persons. <b>Data collection:</b> In-depth interviews.	To examine the feelings and attitudes of the rural elderly towards pension against the background of rural urbanization and population aging.	Non-migrant community.					Lack of financial stability attributed to dependence on children.	Children.	The spiritual needs of the elderly are ignored and filial piety has also reduced.	Children.

No.	Reference	Country	Methodology	Subject matter	Type of community the elderly belong to (e.g. migrant community, non-migrant community)	Physical neglect	Physical neglect caused by which family member	Verbal neglect	Verbal neglect caused by which family member	Economic (financial) neglect	Economic (financial) neglect caused by which family member	Psychological neglect	Psychological neglect caused by which family member
			<b>Research tool:</b> Interview guideline. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> Colaizzi's phenomenology analysis method.										
15	Zhou L, Chen Y. Crisis intervention model for widowhood effect on the elderly who suffer spousal loss. Social Work and Management. 2014;14(2): 57-66.	China	<b>Methodology:</b> Qualitative. <b>Sampling:</b> Unspecified. <b>Data collection:</b> Case study. <b>Research tool:</b> Unspecified. <b>Data analysis tool:</b> Unspecified.	The research focused on helping widows with the final aim of assisting them to get the ability to independently cope with any crisis which would happen in the future.	Non-migrant community.							Loneliness and sadness due to the death of the spouse, and feelings of being neglected.	Children (Son and daughter);  Grandson and granddaughter



## DISCUSSION

The threefold purposes of a scoping review were to map out the relevant literature on a specific academic topic, identify gaps through detailed analysis and to offer directions for future research based on the identified gaps<sup>24-25</sup>. The focus of this scoping review is on the neglect perpetrated on the elderly by nuclear family members, therefore, all efforts have been aimed in this direction. Presented below are the gaps identified and the proposed directions for future research.

### *Summary of evidence*

Neglect is part of the maltreatment experienced by the elderly from their nuclear family members. In terms of physical neglect, the data in the included articles indicates the withholding of physical necessities such as housing, medical attention and proper nutrition but did not cover in more detail how these physical necessities are withheld. Also, the included literature does not indicate in greater detail why these physical necessities are withheld from the elderly by their nuclear family? Future research on the subject of the physical neglect of the elderly by their nuclear family members may address these gaps in the literature by delving deeper into the details of physical neglect through an ethnographic lens that would address the presently absent details. This research approach may fill in the gap in the present literature in terms of the details of why neglect is forced upon the elderly by their immediate family members. Additionally, the included articles indicated that financial constraints place the elderly in the position of being neglected by their immediate family, but did not address how their finances have become so restrained or how their financial status may be improved so that they are not deprived of physical necessities. This gap may be addressed by future research that focuses on public administration research aimed at the provision of finances for the elderly, as well

as legal studies aimed at the rights of the elderly to have lawful control over their own cash assets, as well as legal recourse for acts of swindling perpetrated against them by their families. These studies may be done from the perspectives of public administration and legal studies in tandem with health-related disciplines such as nursing, social work and psychology to gain a multidisciplinary understanding of the issue of financial neglect of the elderly by their nuclear family members.

The data of the included articles regarding the experiences of the elderly of psychological neglect may be summed up in one phrase: exclusion from the nuclear family. This exclusion as indicated in the included articles have a myriad of manifestations and may be perpetrated by all nuclear family members, despite gender or relationship with the elderly in the nuclear family. Three main gaps of psychological neglect of the elderly by their nuclear family members are identified. The first gap is concerned with psychological neglect of the elderly by their nuclear family members. Namely, the gap of how do stress levels experienced by the children impact their perpetration of psychological neglect? The second gap is about interpersonal relationships and psychological neglect. Specifically, how do the dynamics of the relationship between the elderly person and their offspring impact psychological neglect; and how do their past underlying relationship history impact their present reasons for psychological neglect? The third gap identified addresses the external surrounding and psychological neglect. This has to do with how do living conditions lead to stressors that cause/exacerbate psychological neglect of the elderly by their nuclear family members? Future research on these subjects by mental health professionals, social workers and academics in the field of psychology could address these gaps and create intervention programs for both the

elderly and their offspring to lessen psychological neglect.

Financial neglect, based on the data from the included articles, is intertwined with the physical and psychological neglect faced by the elderly from their nuclear family members. The gap identified is the role that finances play in the perpetration of neglect. Future research by academics in the discipline of social work could explore this facet of the correlation between finances and neglect of the elderly, and address this gap from an academic stance. Additionally, future research to address this gap in the present literature could be taken quantitatively to seek out the correlation between financial neglect, physical neglect and psychological neglect and the inter-relationship between these types of neglect as perpetrated upon the elderly by their immediate family members.

The least addressed form of neglect in the included articles was verbal neglect. The gap identified is that verbal neglect may also take the form of responding to verbal communication by the elderly with scorn, contempt, indifference, derision, insults and threats - these have not been fully explored and analyzed in the included articles. To address such a gap, future research may focus on the subject of how verbal neglect of the elderly by their nuclear family members may be circumnavigated and addressed from the mental health, social work and communication disciplines. Such studies could potentially lead to further interventions by interested scholars and other stakeholders based on empirical research on the subject of verbal neglect of the elderly by nuclear family members.

The data from the included articles also indicated that all nuclear family members are capable of being perpetrators of neglect of the elderly. No particular type of neglect was consistently perpetrated by any one specific family member in the included articles although the children of

the elderly are the nuclear family members most mentioned as being involved in acts of neglect. Therefore, future research by scholars in the mental health disciplines may conduct research to further explore the psychological connection between neglect and elderly parent-child relationship, while public health and social work scholars may conduct research on future interventions for the elderly who are victims of neglect due to overdependence on their children. Additionally, future research may focus on the neglect of the elderly by extended family members to add to this area of research; and sociologists and anthropologists may choose to conduct research on the cultural construct of filial piety and the correlation between perceived decline of filial piety and neglect of the elderly within cultural contexts where filial piety is deemed a cultural expectation in family relationships and dynamics.

### ***Limitations***

A limitation faced by the authors was unreliable or weak internet connections. As the authors were separated by both geographic distance and social distancing measures they had to depend on online meeting platforms. Weak and/or unreliable internet connections posed a challenge to the smooth and uninterrupted flow of these meetings. In the future, the authors will seek out more reliable internet service providers to avoid such a recurrence with online meetings and discussions. Another limitation was the language capability/proficiency of the authors. Despite proficiency in English, Thai and Chinese Languages, the articles in languages such as French and Spanish that could potentially have been included in this scoping review were left out due to the lack of knowledge of these languages by the authors. Future scoping reviews conducted by the authors will include co-researchers who are fluent in the French and Spanish Languages. A strength of this scoping

review included a thorough search in the English, French and Chinese Languages – this expanded the scope of possible included articles beyond the limit of articles published in only one language. Another strength of this scoping review is the cohesive and collective manner of teamwork used for data extraction and synthesis by the authors. This teamwork allowed for discussion among the authors regarding the validity of the extracted data for the study, the match of the extracted data to the study and the synthesis of the data for final inclusion in this academic work.

## CONCLUSION

Neglect is an often-hidden phenomenon experienced by the elderly, possibly due to the social and cultural stigma attached to it, and more so if the neglect is perpetrated by nuclear family members. However, neglect of the elderly by their nuclear family members as an academic phenomenon needs to be addressed by members of the academic community in the disciplines of mental health, psychology, social work and other social sciences in light of the growing global aging population. Giving focus to this academic phenomenon will assist in the creation of better prevention and intervention measures as well as create the availability of empirical knowledge on the subject, especially in a social context where inevitably a huge percentage of the population will be elderly members of society. It is hoped that this manuscript may provide a possible impetus to these scholarly endeavors.

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