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Professor of Gerontology
Executive Director: Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies

BIOGRAPHY

Mary Gilhooly is Executive Director of the Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies, Professor of Gerontology, and Deputy Head Research, School of Health Sciences and Social Care, Brunel University, England. Professor Gilhooly's interest in legal and ethical issues associated with dementia lead her to do an MPhil in Law and Ethics in Medicine long after completing her training as a psychologist.

Professor Gilhooly recently completed a major Economic and Social Research Council funded study on decision-making in detecting and preventing financial elder abuse. The UK charity, Action on Elder Abuse, was a key partner in this research. Decision-making was examined through the lens of a 'professional bystander intervention model'. For professionals to act to prevent financial abuse they must pass through five stages in their decision-making: (1) noticing relevant cues to financial abuse, (2) construing the situation as suspected financial abuse,(3) deciding the situation is a personal responsibility (4) knowing how to deal with the situation, and finally, (5) deciding to intervene. At any one of these complex stages a decision may be taken which prevents action. Mental capacity was found to be a key 'decision cue'. Although this might seem obvious, it was a worrying finding that professionals are less likely to conclude that financial abuse is taking place if an older person has mental capacity. We might, after all, want such abuse to be detected *before* the loss of capacity.

Professor Gilhooly's varied research portfolio includes research on the effects of playing chess and doing crosswords on cognitive ability in old age, the role of information and communication technologies in quality of life in old age, barriers to the use of public transport by elderly people, quality of life and real-life cognitive functioning and incontinence. Professor Gilhooly conducted one of the first studies in the UK on family care of people with dementia.

Professor Gilhooly was President of the British Society of Gerontology from 2000-2004 and a member of council of the International Association of Gerontology. Recognition of her contribution to the social sciences, and gerontology in particular, led to her election in 2006 as an Academician in The Academy for the Social Sciences. The British Society of Gerontology honoured her contribution to the Society with the award of BSG Founding Fellow.

STATEMENT

If elected as Vice-President I pledge to work hard during my term of office with the President and Executive Committee to further the aims and objectives of INPEA. In particular I would work to expand membership and raise the profile of INPEA in Europe and around the world.

As an active researcher in the field of financial elder abuse, with recent publications in international journals, I am in a strong position to make contact with other elder abuse researchers, as well as to help recruit PhD students and early career researchers from social gerontology to not only INPEA but to elder abuse research. Financial abuse in particular is expected to become more prevalent as the numbers of older people increases and the economy continues to stagnate. Policy makers and research councils around the world are finally waking up to the need to understand how best to protect vulnerable older adults from maltreatment.

Apart from my experience as a researcher on elder abuse, I have organizational experience that would be of value to INPEA. I was President of the British Society of Gerontology from 2000-2004, with one year periods before and after as President-Elect and Past President. During this time I was a council member of the International Association of Gerontology (now IAGG). These activities gave me wide-ranging contacts around the world, contacts which I maintain and which would be useful in the role as Vice-President of INPEA.

As Executive Director of the Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies I have access to resources which would be of benefit to INPEA. For example, I am in a position to fund seminars and conferences in the UK, as well as sponsor seminars at international conferences. This position also means that attendance at INPEA meetings at international conference is always feasible.

My extensive experience in senior management positions in UK universities has given me insights on how to help organizations grow and thrive, as well as how to motivate staff to become actively involved and collegiate. I am currently Deputy Head for Research at Brunel University and I was Head of School, Social Work and Primary Care, University of Plymouth. At the University of Paisley I was Director of the Centre of Gerontology and Health Studies and during my tenure in the Medical School, University of Glasgow, I was Co-Director of the Institute of Law and Ethics in Medicine. These positions, plus my teaching roles have, I believe, provided me with skills that would enable me to competently perform in the position of Vice-President.

Finally, although I have participated in INPEA activities (for example, conferences to celebrate World Elder Abuse Awareness Day), I would welcome the opportunity for the greater involvement that the Vice-Presidency would offer.

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