

## **Conference on “Violence and Abuse against the Elderly”** **Ariela Lowenstein, Israel, reporting**

On February 5, 2009, the Center for Research and Study of Aging and the MA Dept. of Gerontology at the University of Haifa, Israel, held a conference on “Violence and Abuse Against the Elderly”, collaborating by the Israeli Ministry of Senior Citizens, who also funded the conference. The conference was chaired by Prof. Ariela Lowenstein, head of the Center and INPEA European Regional Representative.

Close to 150 people attended, including academic staff members and professionals working in this area from around the country.

The guest speaker was Dr. Lia Diachman, President of INPEA who talked about ‘Age Discrimination, Human Rights and Elder Abuse’. Dr. Avi Bitzur, the director general of the Ministry of Senior Citizens presented a national project to prevent violence against the elderly where all governmental ministries are collaborating.

A panel chaired by Prof. Yitzchak Brick, Professor in the Gerontology Dept. and Director of ESHEL (The Ass. for Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel) discussed the issue of activating legal methods versus treatment interventions to deal with issues of elder abuse and neglect. The panel included a lawyer – Dr. Israel Doron who is a member of the Gerontology Dept. and Chair of the Israeli Gerontological Association, Dr. Sara Alon, a social workers who is in charge of elder abuse activities in ESHEL and is Israel Rep. to INPEA, as well as representatives from the health and welfare systems and a lawyer heading a legal organization which provides legal services to elders.

Another panel dealt with the development of assessment tools to identify elder abuse and neglect in the health system. The EASI tool developed by Prof. Mark Yaffe from Montreal (who could not attend at the last moment) was presented and discussed by Prof. Lowenstein and Dafna Halperin who are validating the tool in Israel within their activities in NICE, Canada. Dr. Miri Cohen, the head of the Gerontology Dept. presented tools she with colleagues are developing.

The afternoon was devoted to working in groups dealing with issues of abuse and neglect within the framework of unique models in the health and welfare services, education and training issues.

The feedback from the conference was very positive and enthusiastic and it helped also to further awareness on the topic.