MONITORING VIOLENCE
AND VIOLATION OF RIGHTS
AGAINST OLDER PEOPLE
Senex Monitoring: Monitoring Violence and Violation of Rights Against Older People
June Report

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Senex: Association for Aging Studies started **Senex Monitoring** to monitor violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people throughout the year and to present them to the public, starting from January 2021.

Senex Monitoring aims to raise awareness among central and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, academia, and all concerned constituents to prevent violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people. Thus, it aims to contribute to the development of evidence-based policies.

Within the scope of Senex Monitoring, violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people will be reported throughout 2021. This fourth report covers the analyses of the cases in June 2021.

**Method**
Senex Monitoring is based on data collected by monitoring the printed media news. All violations against older people, especially violence, neglect, and discrimination are classified. The unit of analysis consists of cases, not news. Senex Monitoring’s June 2021 report includes analyses of cases between June 1-30.
The research that I have conducted on ageism indicates that discriminatory attitudes against older people in Turkey are prevalent. We all observed that discriminatory attitudes against older people spread very quickly in public spaces when the Covid-19 pandemic started. Many people thought that hatred toward older people was a new thing. However, age discrimination is increasingly becoming widespread in Turkey. Antalya Aging Study waves in 2013, 2016, and 2020 showed that ageism rose from 3.5% to 7% and finally to 10% respectively. Indeed, ageism has reached 8% in Turkey during the Covid-19 pandemic as can be seen in the research conducted with Raoul Wallenberg Institute's support.

During my research, I realized that instances of violence, neglect, and abuse against older people in Turkey were not isolated cases. Rather, cases of violence, neglect and abuse, often regarded as exceptions, were widespread. In fact, it was happening in cyclical pattern. These observations were the main reasons that motivated us to carry out the Senex Monitoring.

Thus, we began to monitor violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people, beginning in January 2021. The number of cases with a monthly average of 146 in the last 5 months was 133 in June. Deaths attributed to unnatural causes are pretty widespread. Beside this, suspicious deaths rank second. Additionally, fires and accidents constitute substantial numbers. As a matter of fact, it is quite striking that the vast majority of persons who lost their lives from fires in June were older people living alone.

The findings that we obtained are shared in the report. Our aim is to raise awareness of the widespread extent of discriminatory attitudes, violence, neglect, and abuse experienced by older people. Most of the cases can be prevented, thereby, decreasing harmful effects. Senex Monitoring aims to provide local governments and civil society, as well as academia and policymakers, with the factual support and incentive to address the problem in order to overcome the violence and violations. I hope we can raise awareness and use this evidence to bring about improvements.

Özgür Arun
When examining the violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination in Turkey in June 2021, 133 cases were detected. Most of the cases (15) took place in Istanbul, with the remaining cases in Aydın (12), Antalya (10), Sakarya (7), and Kocaeli (6) respectively.

Figure 1. The cities where violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people are most frequently seen (n)
In June 2021, of all cases detected in Turkey, 38 cases consisted of fatalities caused by unnatural events such as falling, being struck, accident, poisoning, fire, drowning and neglect. Also, 25 cases are classified as suspicious deaths. It has been reported that forensic investigations of suspicious deaths are ongoing. On the other hand, we detected 4 murders and 4 suicide cases. As a result, it is understood that of all violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people cases in June, 53% resulted in death.
The third most common types of violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people in June 2021 consisted of accidents due to neglect. The number of accidents experienced by older people while using pedestrian crossings was notably high. On the other hand, 9 cases of fire occurred in Turkey in June. Fires usually occur in the houses of poor older people living alone.

![Bar chart showing the most common types of violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people in Turkey (n)](image)

Figure 2. The most common types of violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people in Turkey (n)

Seven cases of fraud occurred in cases of falling in June. Also, we detected 4 cases of murder, 4 cases of suicide, 4 cases of physical violence and 4 cases of disappearance of older adults in June. Cases with a number of 3 or less were collected in the "other" category. These are classified as theft, neglect, poisoning, ageism, sexual assault, shooting and natural disaster.
Of all cases in June, 37% consisted of violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older women. Older men experience violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination in 55% of all cases. Older couples are victims in 6% of all cases. The rate of cases where gender is unknown is 1%. On the other hand, the rate of cases with more than one older person is 1%.
Violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination were experienced by people in Turkey between the ages of 45 and 95 during June. Age of victims is unknown in 26 cases. Those whose ages are not specified are reported as “elderly”, “elderly man”, “elderly woman”, “elderly citizen”, and “elderly individual”. The average age of those who experienced violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination is 72.

![Bar chart showing distribution of older people by age groups (in %)](image)

**Figure 3.** Distribution of older people who experienced violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination by age groups (%)

Of all violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination cases in May, 24% were against people who are under 64 years of age. The rate of those in the 65-74 age group was found to be 36%. The rate of older people aged 75+ who experienced violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination was 40%.
EVALUATION

In June, there were 133 cases of violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people detected by Senex Monitoring in Turkey. It is quite striking that violations faced by older people result in death.

The deaths that occurred due to unnatural events such as falls from heights, being struck, and neglect of care are prevalent. We detected that 3 older couples, 16 older women and 19 older men lost their lives because of such events in June. Secondly, it is notable that suspicious deaths are very common as well. Forensic units are still investigating the cases of suspicious deaths of 21 older men and 4 older women.

Of all accidents identified as violence, abuse and neglect cases, it is seen that 3 older couples, 4 older women and 7 older men were affected in the accidents. We detected that 5 older women, 3 older men and 1 older group (more than one person) were affected in fires. 4 older women, 2 older men, 2 older couples and 1 older person (gender unspecified) were affected in fires in June. In fraud cases, we observe that primarily older women were targeted (5 cases).

In the cases of falling, 3 older men, 2 older women and 1 older person were affected. In June, the number of older people who were victims of murder, suicide, disappearance, and violence (4 cases each) decreased compared to the last five months.

It is notable that in June, as in the previous five months, nearly all of the most affected population in all cases of violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination are poor older adults. Indeed, deaths that occurred due to violence and neglect are very common among poor older adults. It is possible to prevent most such deaths by taking preventative action. With the provision of age-friendly environments and services, it is seen that falls from heights, being struck, fire, work accidents, and similar incidents can be prevented.

All the violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination faced by poor older people, especially widowed, and disabled older women, is due to structural factors. The services to be developed by local governments regarding age-friendly environments and the preventative actions to be taken by public institutions can reduce deaths.
Senex Monitoring, June 2021

Violence, neglect, violation of rights and discrimination against older people

Number of Case

1 - 15

Source: Senex | Association for Aging Studies • Created with Datawrapper
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