



**Key Research Findings**

**Bruising in Older Adults:**

Accidental Bruising and  
Bruising from Physical Abuse  
*ENGLISH*

I. Key findings from a study of **accidental bruising in older adults**:

- Color of a bruise did not indicate its age. A bruise could have any color from day one.
- 90% of accidental bruises were on the extremities rather than the trunk, neck or head.
- Less than a quarter of older adults with accidental bruises remembered how they got them.
- Older adults taking medications that interfere with coagulation pathways were more likely to have multiple bruises, but the bruises did not last any longer than the bruises of those who didn't take these medications.

II. Key findings from a study of **bruising in older adults who have been physically abused** were:

1. Large. More than half of older adults with bruises who had been physically abused had at least one bruise 5 cm (about 2 inches) in diameter or larger.
2. Could be anywhere, but note especially if they are on face, lateral (same side as the thumb) or anterior (same side as the palm of the hand) surface of the arm, or on the back. Older adults with bruises who had been abused had more bruises in these areas than older adults whose bruises were accidental.

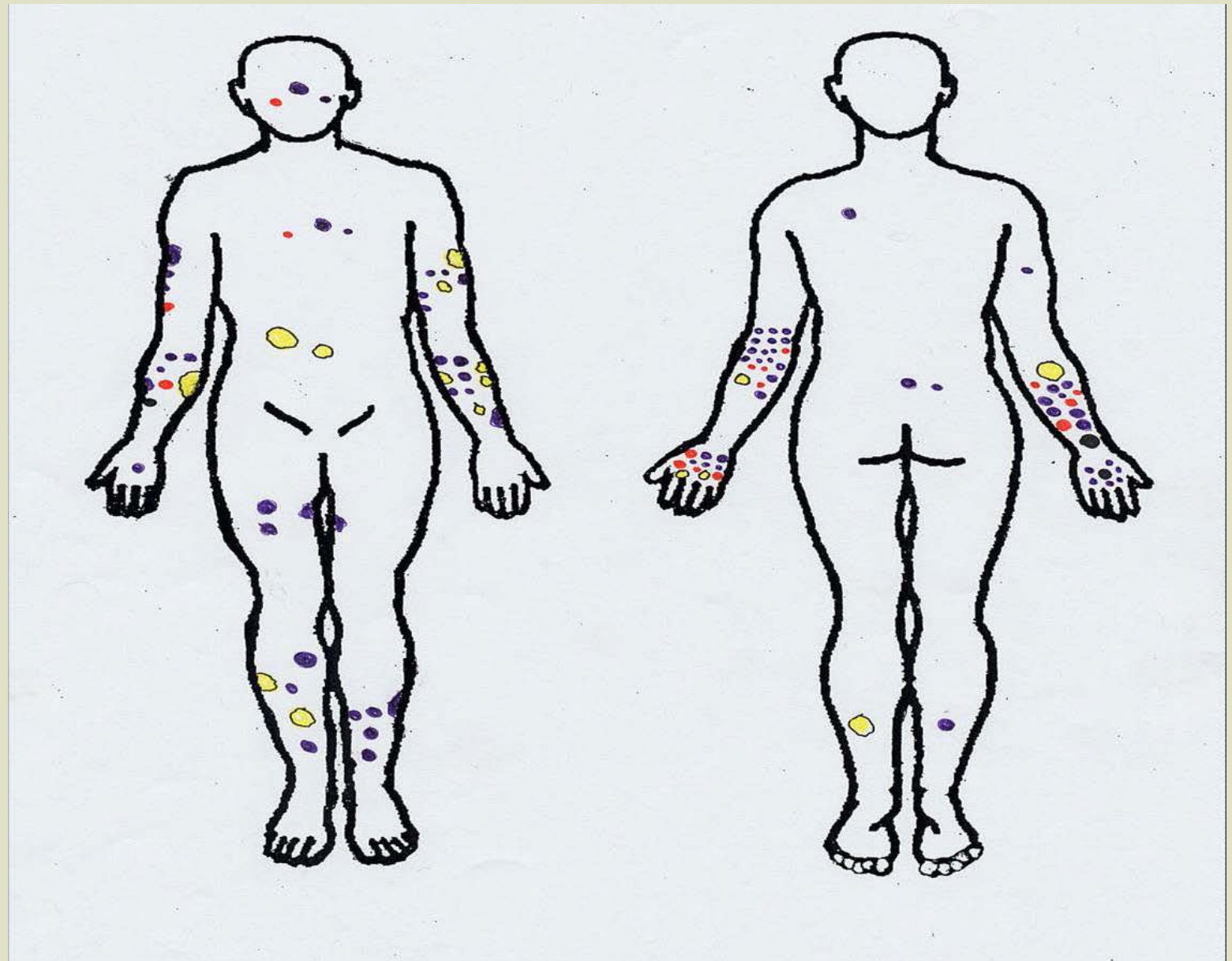
And please,

3. Ask the older adult about bruises – gently and in private. 90% of older adults with bruises who have been physically abused **can** tell you how they got their bruises, and this includes many older adults with memory problems and dementia.

# PART I: Accidental Bruising in Older Adults

Key findings from a study of accidental bruising in older adults:

- **Color of a bruise did not indicate its age.** A bruise could have any color from day one.
- **90% of accidental bruises were on the extremities** rather than the trunk, neck or head.
- **Less than a quarter of older adults with accidental bruises remembered** how they got them.
- **Older adults taking medications** that interfere with coagulation pathways were more likely to have **multiple bruises**, but the bruises **did not last any longer** than the bruises of those who didn't take these medications.

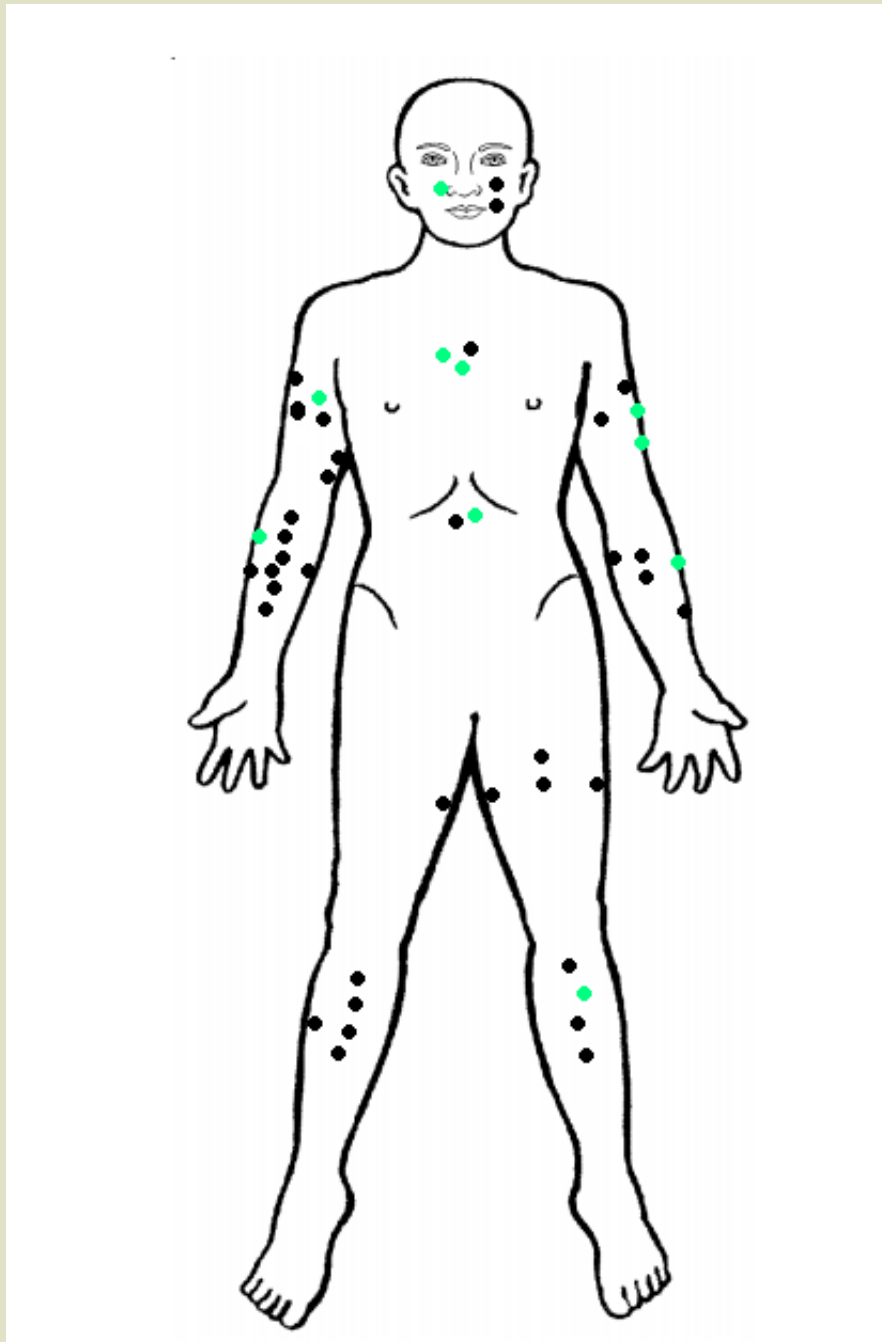


Citation: Mosqueda L, Burnight K, Liao S. The life cycle of bruises in older adults. J Am Geriatr Soc. 2005 Aug;53(8):1339-43.

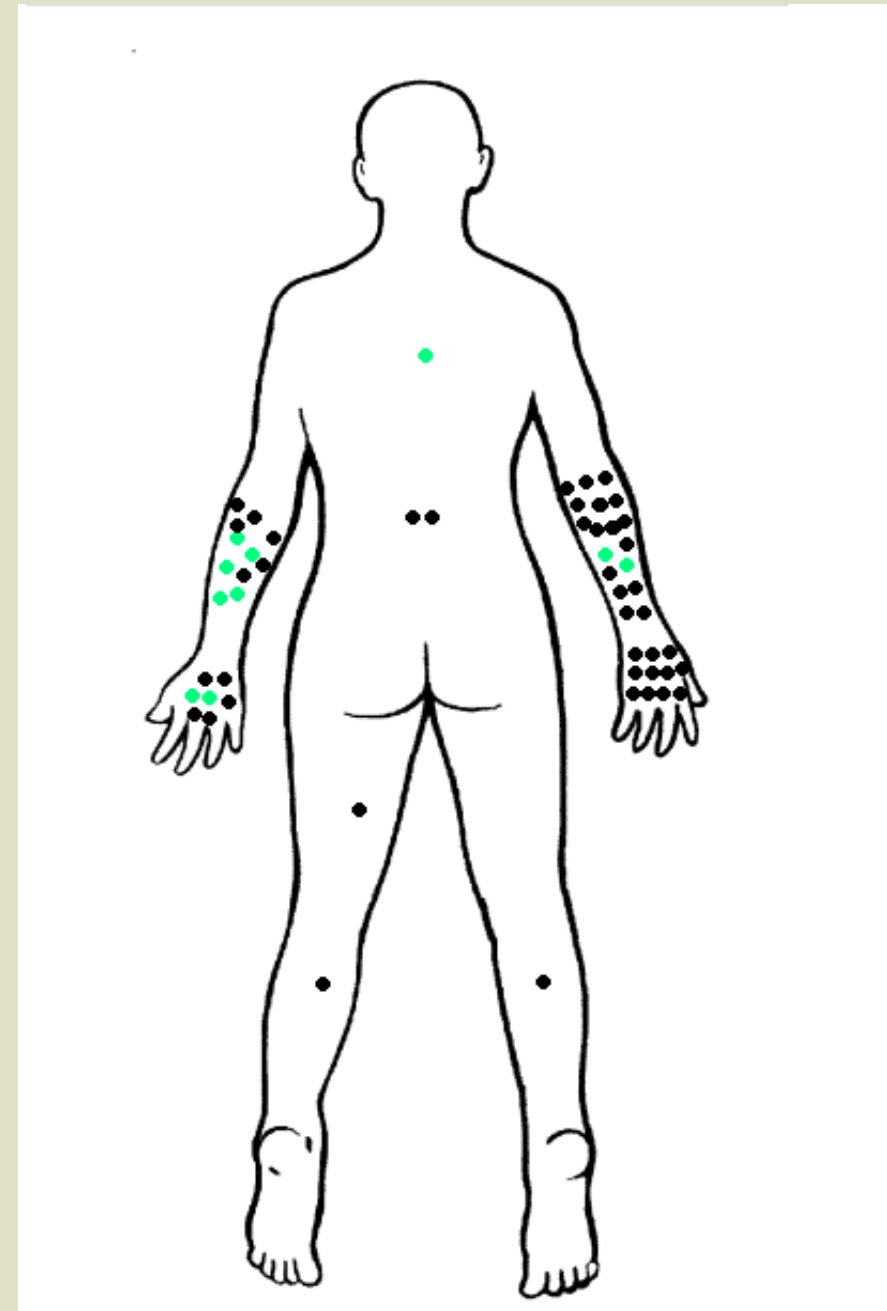
*This project was funded by Grant 2001-IJ-CX-KO14 from the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs*

# Accidental and Unknown Bruising

Anterior View



Posterior View



● Unknown  
● Accidental

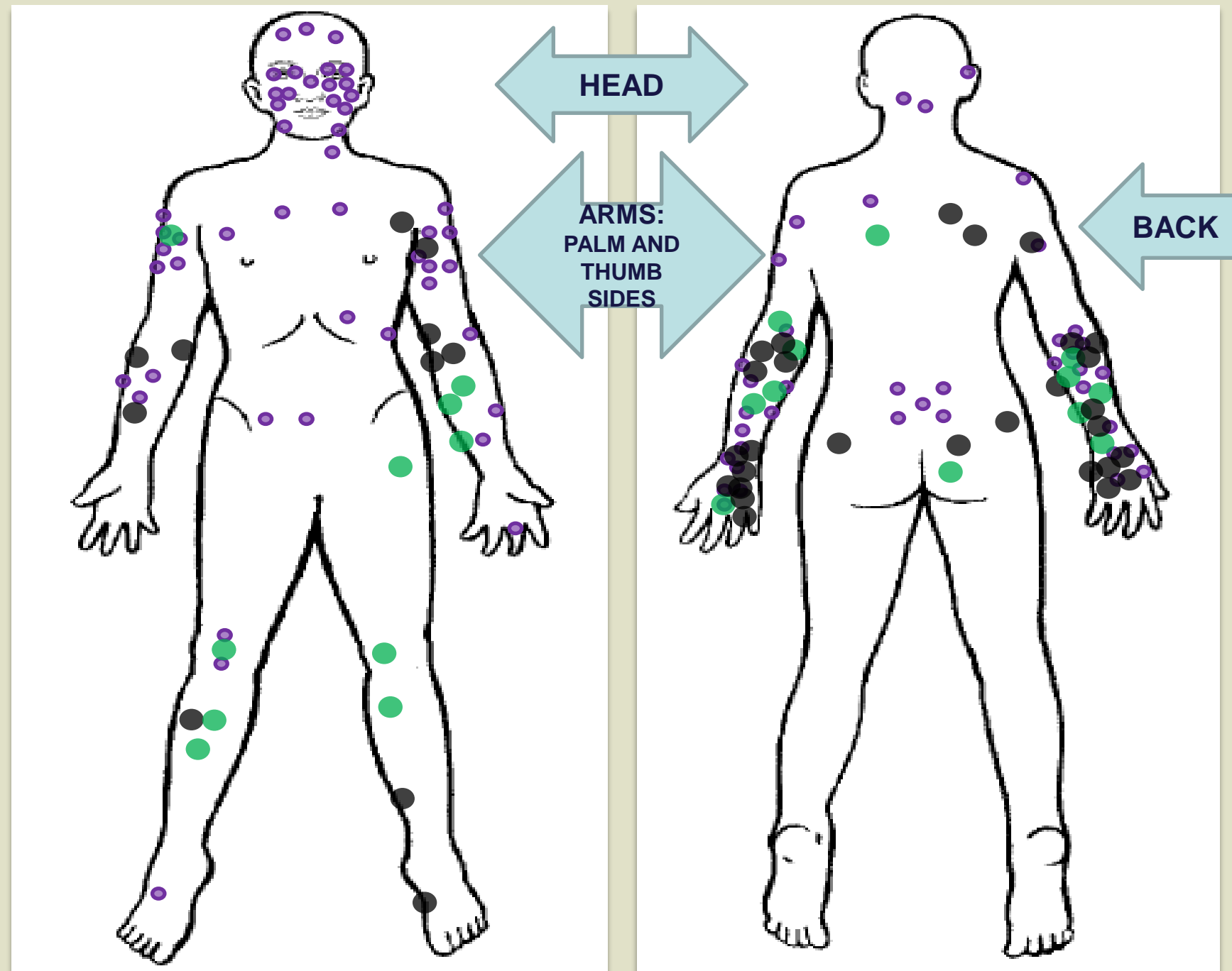
# PART II: Bruising in Older Adults as Reported by Abused Elders

## Key findings from this study:

- **Bruises were large.** More than half of older adults with bruises who had been physically abused had at least one bruise **5 cm (about 2 inches) in diameter or larger.**

- Older adults with bruises who had been abused had **more bruises in areas indicated in blue** than older adults whose bruises were accidental.

- **90%** of older adults with bruises who have been physically abused **can tell you how they got their bruises, and this includes many older adults with memory problems and dementia.**



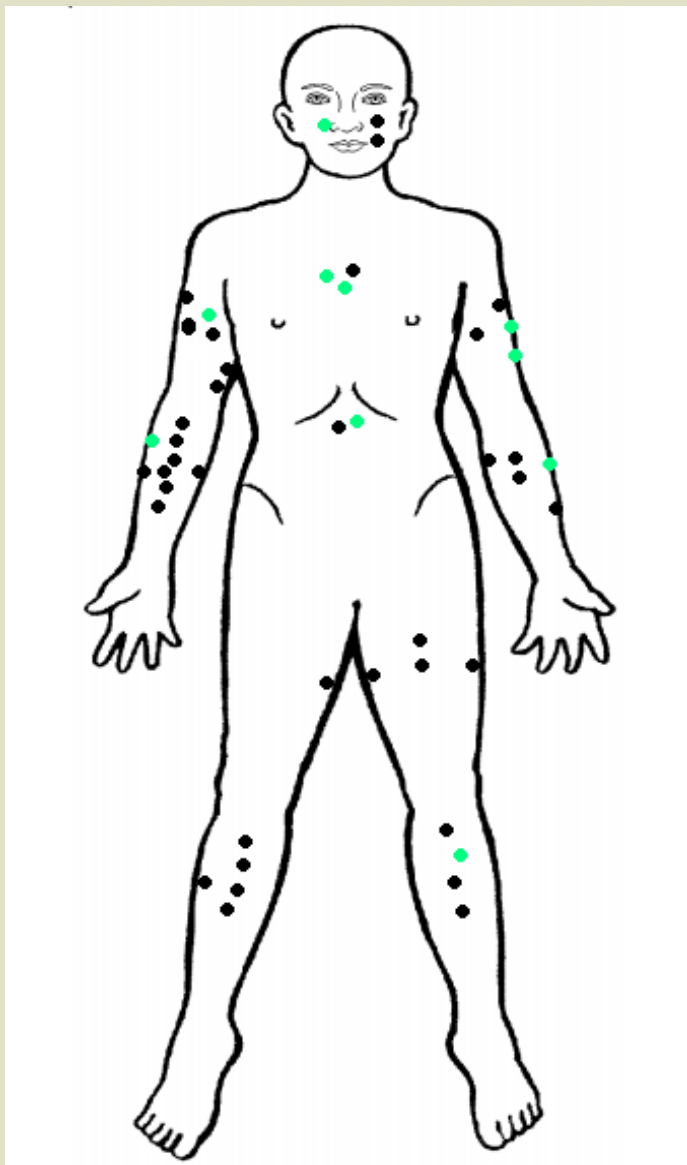
*This project was funded by Grant 2005-IJ-CX-0048 from the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs*

● Unknown  $f=39$   
● Accidental  $f=23$   
● Inflicted  $f=93$

Citation: Wigglesworth A, Austin R, Corona M, Schneider D, Liao S, Gibbs L, Mosqueda L. Bruising as a marker of physical elder abuse. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2009 Jul;57(7):1191-6.

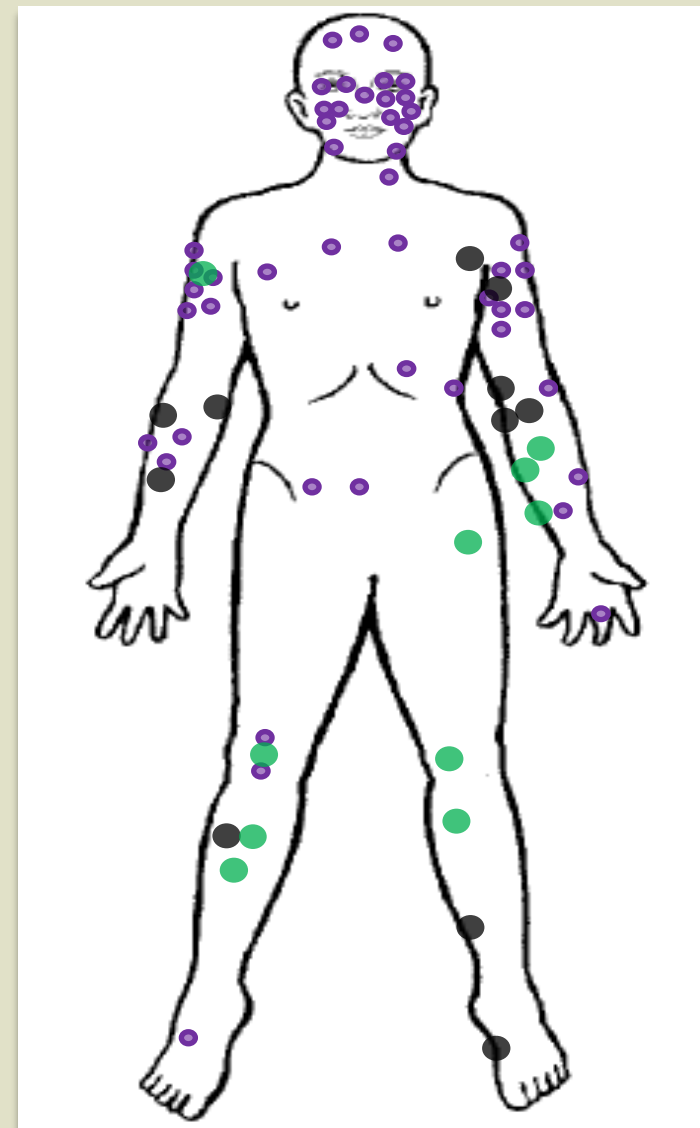
# Anterior Comparison

## Part I: Accidental



- Unknown
- Accidental

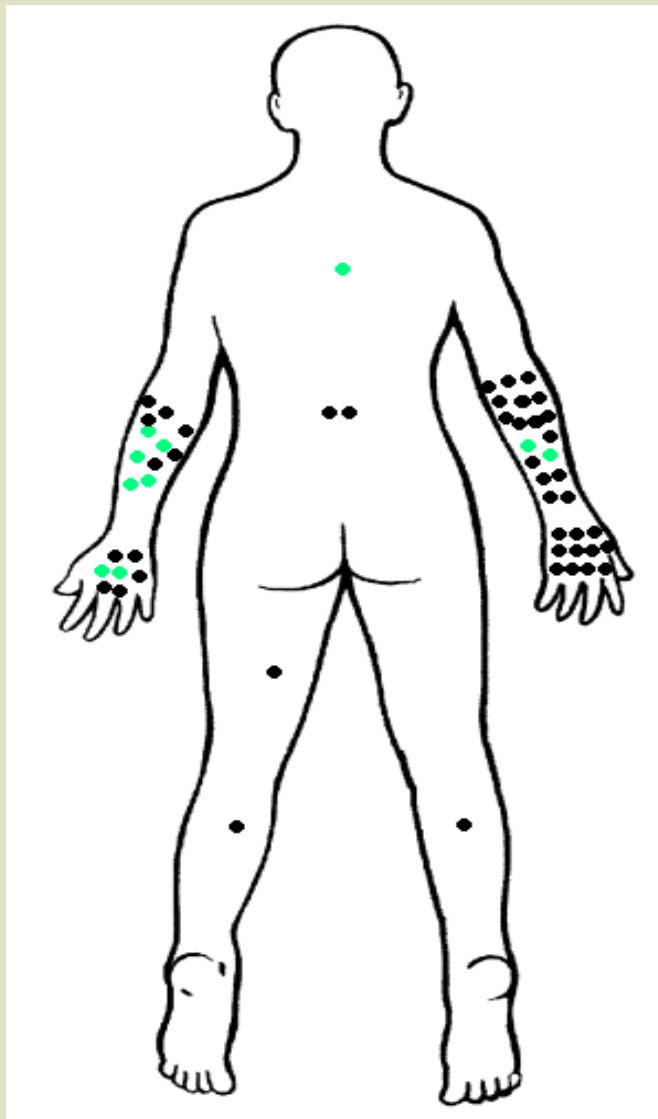
## Part II: Physical Abuse



- Unknown
- Accidental
- Inflicted

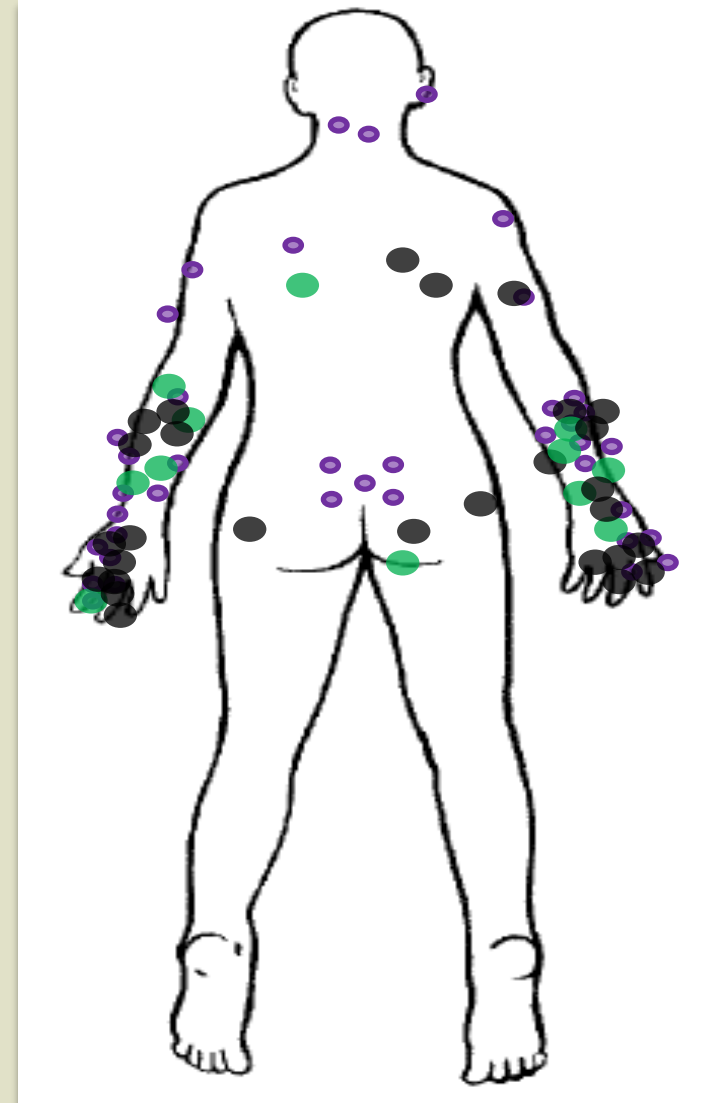
# Posterior Comparison

Part I: Accidental



- Unknown
- Accidental

Part II: Physical Abuse



- Unknown
- Accidental
- Inflicted