



RESEARCH TO PRACTICE TRANSLATION

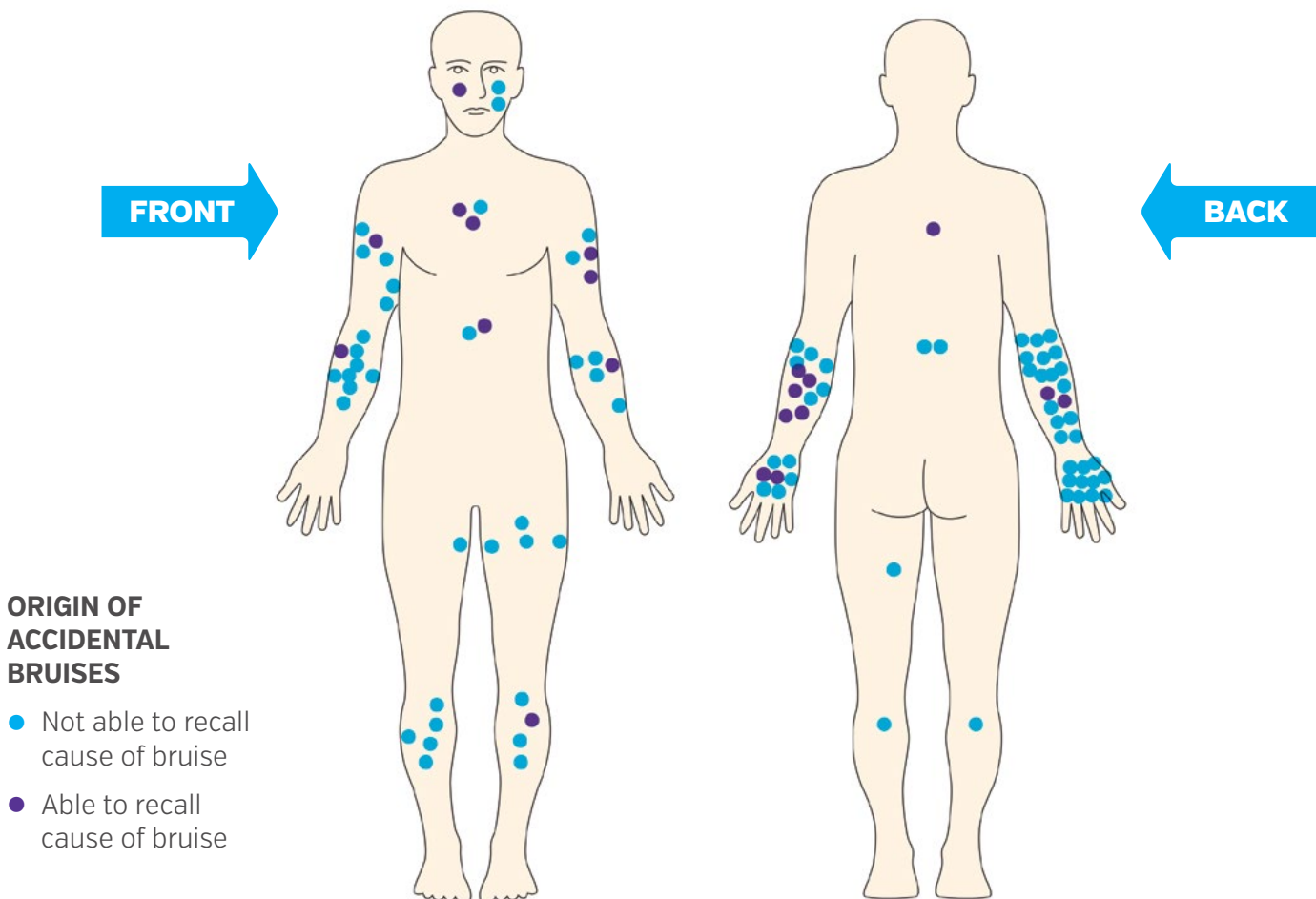
Bruising in Older Adults: Accidental Bruising and Bruising from Physical Abuse

Our research translations highlight key points of aging- and abuse-related research articles for use by practitioners working with older adults. Visit the National Center on Elder Abuse website and click Library for more information on research www.ncea.aoa.gov.

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.



PART II:

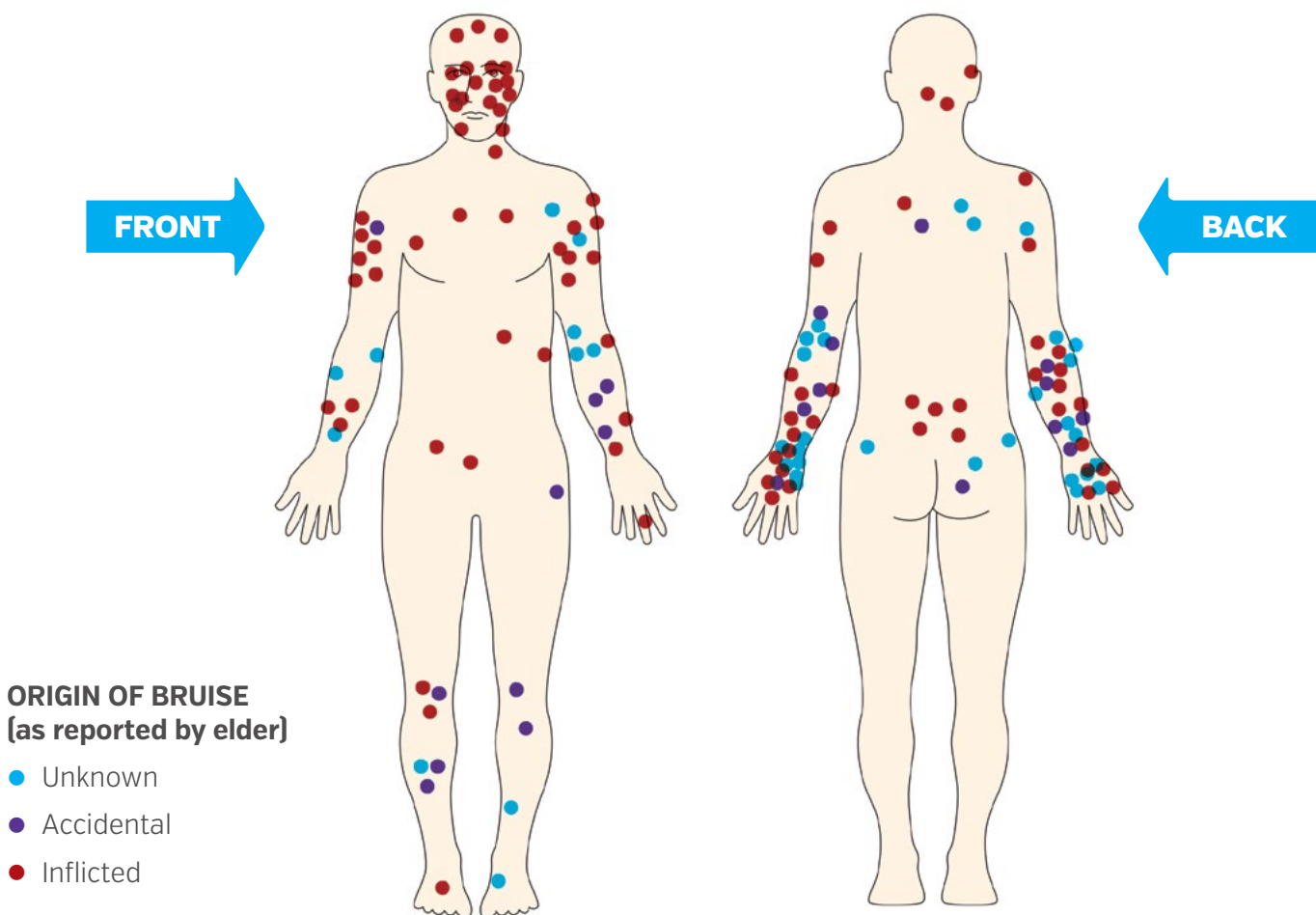
BRUISING IN OLDER ADULTS AS REPORTED BY ABUSED ELDERS

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

1. 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**.
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**.

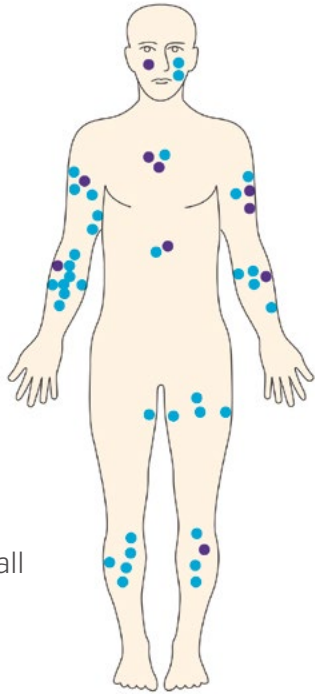


Citation: Wigglesworth A, Austin R, Corona M, Schneider D, Liao S, Gibbs L, Mosqueda L. Bruising as a marker of physical elder abuse. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2009 Jul;57(7):1191-6.

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

Anterior Comparison

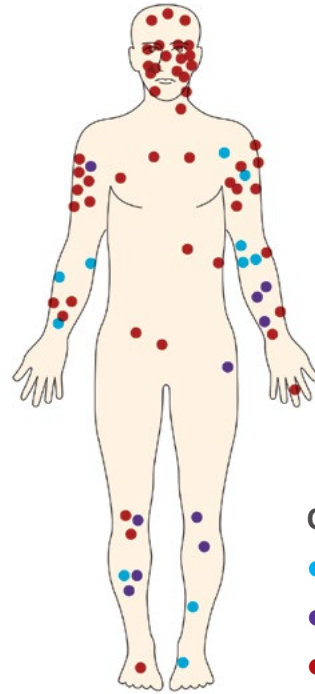
PART I: ACCIDENTAL



ORIGIN OF ACCIDENTAL BRUISES

- Not able to recall cause of bruise
- Able to recall cause of bruise

PART II: PHYSICAL ABUSE

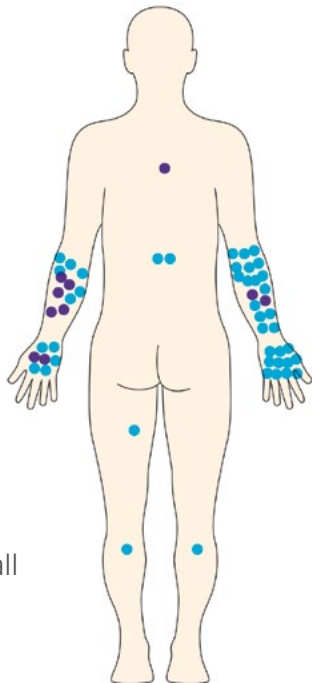


ORIGIN OF BRUISE

- Unknown
- Accidental
- Inflicted

Posterior Comparison

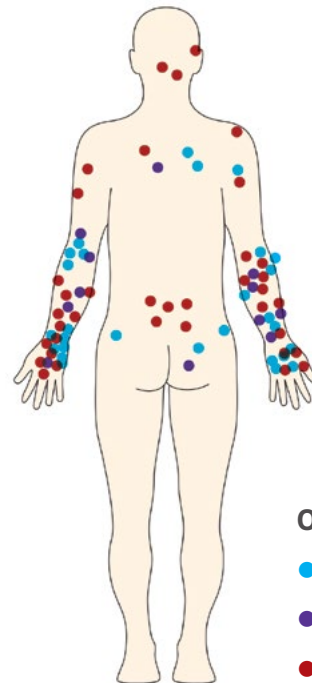
PART I: ACCIDENTAL



ORIGIN OF ACCIDENTAL BRUISES

- Not able to recall cause of bruise
- Able to recall cause of bruise

PART II: PHYSICAL ABUSE



ORIGIN OF BRUISE

- Unknown
- Accidental
- Inflicted