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CANADA

## Attack on elderly Asian man with dementia 'racially motivated,' Vancouver police say

By **Joanna Chiu** Vancouver Bureau

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VANCOUVER—Vancouver Police are asking for the public's help after an elderly Asian man with dementia was assaulted in a "racially motivated attack" in East Vancouver.

The 92-year-old victim had wandered into a convenience store near Nanaimo Street and East 1st Avenue on the afternoon of March 13, when the male suspect began yelling racist insults at the victim, including comments about [COVID-19](#), police said Tuesday.

Outside the store, the suspect shoved the man, which caused him to fall to the ground and hit his head, police said.

"Everything about this assault and the behaviour of the suspect is despicable," said Constable Tania Visintin in the emailed statement.

Police have released photos and [surveillance video](#) showing the attacker. They are asking for the public's help to identify the suspect, described as a white man in his fifties who is around six feet tall with a heavy build and dark, balding hair

He was wearing heavy gold jewelry including a thick, gold bracelet, a gold necklace and several gold rings.



The case was first reported to police on March 13, a police spokesperson told the Star.

When asked why police waited more than a month to release information about the attack to the public, the spokesperson said: “Investigators have been working diligently on identifying the suspect since this happened. We take these types of crimes very seriously ... There are many different avenues to investigate a file. One aspect of an investigation is calling on the public for help.”

In recent weeks, Vancouver Police said they have seen a spike in reports of anti-Asian hate-motivated incidents and criminal behaviour.

Out of eleven hate crimes reported to police in March, five of those reports (45 per cent) had an “anti-Asian element.” So far in 2020, there have been a total of nine anti-Asian hate crimes reported to police, in comparison to 12 cases in all of 2019.

“We know that hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents are generally under-reported. We believe the increase in March is indicative of a larger issue,” added Visintin. “We are making a plea to victims or people who witness hate crimes to please come forward and report the incidents to police so they can be investigated.”

Since the coronavirus first appeared in Wuhan, a city in central China, waves of xenophobic and racist attacks have happened all over the globe. In Ontario, a family doctor [said](#) her young son was cornered at school by bullies who wanted to “test” him for coronavirus because he is half-Chinese.

Last month, an Asian-American family, including a two-year-old girl, was attacked outside a grocery store in Texas at knifepoint in what the FBI has called a coronavirus-related hate crime.

“The suspect indicated that he stabbed the family because he thought the family was Chinese, and infecting people with the coronavirus,” according to an [FBI report](#) obtained by ABC News.

Anyone with information about the attack in Vancouver is asked to call VPD investigators at [604-717-2763](tel:604-717-2763) or Crime Stoppers anonymously at [1-800-222-8477](tel:1-800-222-8477).

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