

Fall Prevention Among Community-Dwelling Older Adults

Current Guidelines and Older Adult Responses

ABSTRACT

Older adults are vulnerable to falls that result in injury and disability, making fall prevention a national priority. The purpose of the current study was to evaluate community-dwelling older adults' perceptions about falls and fall prevention activities to guide interventions. Participants had high awareness of falls and believed that they could reduce their risk of falling. Approximately three fourths of participants reported taking actions to reduce risk of falling; however, participation in community fall prevention programs was low. The survey used provides a method to help nurses identify targets for fall prevention interventions to reduce this physical health disparity in vulnerable older populations. [*Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, 44(9), 21-29.]

Falls are a leading cause of morbidity and mortality among community-dwelling older adults worldwide (World Health Organization, 2007), affecting approxi-



mately one third of older adults each year (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2017). Physical and psychological outcomes of falls can lead to a decline in function, loss of independence, and premature death, and result in increasing costs to health care systems (Burns, Stevens, & Lee, 2016; DeGrauw, Anest, Stevens, Xu, & Coronado, 2016). As a result, fall

prevention is a national priority, and included in the goals of Healthy People 2020 (Healthy People, 2018).

After several decades of research, researchers have identified evidence-based fall prevention interventions, supported by guidelines, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses. Unfortunately, few older adults participate in or adhere to fall prevention activi-

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