


Factors related to fear of falling among community-dwelling older adults

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Abstract

Aims and objectives

To investigate the relationship between age, gender, history of falls, balance and gait status, general health perception, activities of daily living and depression to fear of falling in community-dwelling older people in Danang, Vietnam.

Background

Fear of falling is a common and consequential psychosocial problem for older people and can lead to decreased quality of life. There is only limited research on fear of falling in Vietnam.

Design

This is a cross-sectional descriptive study.

Methods

One hundred fifty-three community-dwelling older people were recruited from seven communities of different districts in Danang. Data were collected using six instruments: a demographic questionnaire, the Fall Efficacy Scale-International, the General Health Perception questionnaire, the Barthel Activities of Daily Living, the Geriatric Depression Scale and the Timed Up and Go test. Data were analysed using descriptive and correlational statistics.

Results

The mean Fall Efficacy Scale-International score was 35, indicating a high level of fear of falling. ADLs, general health perception and Timed Up and Go were significantly and negatively related to fear of falling ($r_p = -0.80$, $r_{sp} = -0.77$ and $r_p = -0.75$, respectively). Age, depression and history of falls were significantly and positively related to fear of falling ($r_p = 0.54$, $r_p = 0.45$ and $r_s = 0.39$, respectively). Women were significantly more likely than men to have higher fear of falling ($r_{pb} = -0.28$).

Conclusion

Fear of falling is more common in older people who are female, have a history of falls, have poor balance and gait status, have poor health perception, have greater ADL dependency, are depressed and, within the older people population, are older. Further research could examine additional correlates of fear of falling and develop/evaluate factor-specific intervention strategies to reduce fear of falling among community-dwelling older people.

Relevance to clinical practice

Understanding correlates of fear of falling among older Vietnamese people contributes to healthcare professionals' ability to develop effective cross-cultural and culture-specific interventions to reduce older people's fear of falling and to improve quality of life.

Citing Literature

