

# THE EFFECTS OF HOME BASED NUTRITION AND EXERCISE INTERVENTIONS IN IMPROVING FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY AND PREVENTING FALLS AMONG OLDER ADULTS

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**Background** Unintentional falls are one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity among frail older adults. The higher incidence of falls coupled with a higher number of individuals at risk for poor nutrition and physical function among this group make it critical to explore this issue within the proposed context.

**Purpose** The purpose of the study was to examine the synergistic role of functional capacity and nutrition on falls as well as the impact of combined, home-based nutrition and exercise interventions.

**Methods** For the purpose of the study, 80 individuals over 65 years of age were recruited through Continuing Care and other community-based organisations. The participants were placed in one of four groups: exercise only, nutrition only, exercise and nutrition group, and no intervention comparison group. The exercise and nutrition interventions were the Home Support Exercise Programme and consumptions of liquid adult nutritional supplement (Ensure) daily for 6 months. The participants' demographic information, status on health, function, nutrition, and falls were assessed at baseline and again at 6 months.

**Results** The participants' age ranged from 61–98 (ave=81). Of the participants, 83% were female, 50% lived alone, and 65% required personal assistance to leave their home. The 6 months follow-up showed improvement in improvement in functional capacity in the intervention groups.

**Conclusion** Working with frail elderly provides unique opportunities and challenges.