Concurrent D: Older Adult Falls

CURRENT FALL PREVENTION ACTIVITIES AT THE US CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

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Background Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries among adults aged ≥65 years. In the US in 2009, older adult falls resulted in 20,422 deaths and 2.2 million emergency department visits. Fortunately, research has identified a number of effective falls interventions.

Aims/Objectives/Purpose To better understand how to encourage widespread adoption of evidence-based fall prevention programmes.

Method The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is addressing falls using a four-step public health model. Current work focuses on step four, translating effective interventions into community-based programmes for widespread adoption. To clarify this process, a pilot project was conducted in which four state health departments implemented two evidence-based effective programmes: Tai chi: Moving for Better Balance and Stepping On.

Results/Outcomes The pilot project revealed that older adults with differing functional levels need a choice of community programmes, and that community programmes must be linked to clinical practice. CDC is incorporating these lessons into our current activities, which include disseminating newly developed healthcare provider resources to link clinical practice with three community programmes: Tai chi: Moving for Better Balance, Stepping On, and the Otago Exercise Programme.

Significance/Contribution to the Field People aged ≥65 years are the fastest growing segment of the US population and are particularly vulnerable to falls and fall injuries. To reduce falls, we need a comprehensive approach that incorporates fall prevention into routine clinical practice and links health care practice to community-based fall prevention programmes.