

Platform Presentations

Scientific Presentation (SP): Falls (Falls, Fractures & Trauma)

10 FEAR OF FALLING IN COMMUNITY DWELLING AMBULATORY OLDER PATIENTS: ASSOCIATIONS WITH PHYSIOLOGICAL FALLS RISK, COGNITION AND MOOD DISORDERS

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Introduction: Fear of falling (FOF) is associated with a range of adverse health outcomes including increased risk of falls¹, and more rapid decline in physical and cognitive function². We aim to determine the prevalence of FOF amongst ambulatory community

dwelling older adults attending an Age-Related Day Hospital, and to describe its associations with cognition, mood disorders, frailty and mobility measures.

Methods: A retrospective chart review was conducted on 50 patients attending the Day Hospital. Baseline demographics collected include comorbidities, medications, and falls history. Objective mobility measurements include the Timed Up and Go (TUG) test and grip strength. Patients were divided into two groups based on their answer to the question, “Are you afraid of falling?” Differences between groups were compared using chi-squared test.

Results: The average age of Day Hospital attendees was 85 (SD X). 62% were male. Three quarters of patients experienced a recent fall, and half admitted to FOF. Those with FOF were more likely to be dependent in personal care (27% vs 16%, $p = 0.15$) and use a walking aid (69% vs 58%, $p = 0.02$). They were also more likely to be prescribed psychoactive medications (53% vs 45%, $p = 0.42$), and have a diagnosis of anxiety (4% vs 0%, $p = 0.03$).

Conclusions: Both having a falls history and FOF is prevalent in our Day Hospital population. FOF is associated with high physiological risk of falling, increased dependency, and anxiety. Standardization of mobility measures and potential screening for cognitive and mood disorders in patients with FOF will aid in further development of targeted interventions.