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Reasons for falling among the elderly and the preventive measures: A public health survey

Rabia Mahmood Khan
Liaquat National Hospital, Pakistan

Background: Our elders are at a high risk of falling within their homes rather than outside homes. To be able to help prevent falls people need to know what actually causes them and then ways to help reduce the risks. This public survey will help identify areas we as physicians can highlight in our consultations to educate our public regarding prevention of falls among the elderly.

Method: A questionnaire was administered through the social media (Facebook, email, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger). The questionnaire investigated knowledge related to falls among the elderly and its prevention at home.

Results: 400 people, 75% of whom belonged to Pakistan and the rest from different parts of the world, participated in the survey with age ranging from 19 years to >65 years. 43% and 27% respondents were not sure if poor hearing and multiple medications, respectively, were possible reasons for falls among the elderly. Residents belonging to countries with high income status were twice as likely to take the elderly for assessment of their mobility problem to a general practitioner, than residents of Pakistan, who were just as likely to take the elderly to a specialist like orthopedic surgeon, neurologist or a rheumatologist, than to a general practitioner.

Conclusion: Through the questionnaire, certain knowledge gaps were identified regarding the reasons for falls among the elderly. It was clear that the public was well aware of prevention of falls within homes, but in case of mobility assessment of the elderly, the role of general practitioner needs to be highlighted more.

Biography

Rabia Mahmood Khan is a Staff Family Physician and also a Lecturer of Department of Medical Education in Liaquat National Hospital, Pakistan.

rabia.md@gmail.com

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