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Elderly Falls

Progress Report

Implementing falls prevention research into policy and practice in Australia: Past, present and future

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Abstract

Introduction

Falls in older Australians are a significant public health issue with one in three older people falling one or more times each year.

Method

Many fall prevention randomized controlled trials have been conducted in Australia as well as across the world.

Results

The findings of these studies now constitute a substantial evidence base that can provide direction for health and lifestyle interventions for preventing falls in older people. This research evidence has contributed to health policy in Australia to some extent, but is yet to be widely implemented into practice. This opinion piece overviews previous policy initiatives and describes a new Partnership research program funded by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), which seeks to further influence health policy and address the ongoing research-practice gap.

Keywords

Accidental falls; Aged; Fall prevention; Implementation research; Knowledge translation

There are no figures or tables for this document.

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Stephen Lord is a Senior Principal Research Fellow at Neuroscience Research Australia, University of New South Wales. He trained in biology, physiology and psychology at the University of Sydney and undertook his PhD and DSc degrees at the University of New South Wales. His research interests include understanding balance, indentifying risk factors for falls, fall risk assessments, interventions to prevent falls and translational research including incorporation of validated fall risk assessments into routine practice and implementing evidence-based exercise findings into fall prevention programs.

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was one of the founders of the PEDro- an online database of systematic reviews and randomised controlled trials in physiotherapy. Prior to completing her PhD, Cathie was a clinical physiotherapist in aged care and rehabilitation. Her current research focuses on studies of exercise for the prevention of falls and disability in older people.

Ian Cameron is a Rehabilitation Physician who is a clinician researcher. He has the Chair in Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Sydney, is Director of Medical Services at Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney and works as a staff physician at two hospitals in Sydney, Australia. His research interests are in fall and fracture prevention, and rehabilitation and disability particularly as these relate to older people.

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