

Risk factors for falls among elderly patients admitted to Colombo North Teaching Hospital, Sri Lanka: a cross-sectional analysis

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Introduction and objectives

Falls among the elderly lead to increased morbidity and mortality. Information on risk factors for falls among the elderly is lacking in Sri Lanka. This study aimed to describe characteristics of older adults admitted with falls to a tertiary care hospital.

Methods

Patients >60 years of age admitted with falls to surgical and medical wards of Colombo North Teaching Hospital between January 2021 – March 2021 were recruited. Data were gathered using an interviewer-administered questionnaire after obtaining informed written consent.

Results

Of 300 patients recruited, 99 were men and majority were between 60–74 years of age. Almost half of those recruited had diabetes (48.3%; n=145) and hypertension (54.0%; n=162), while 41% (n=123) were on more than three medications. Age >74 years ($p<0.05$) and use of long-term multiple medications ($p<0.001$) showed significant association with falls. Fear of falling ($p<0.001$), cognitive impairment ($p<0.001$), depression ($p<0.001$), high-risk mobility ($0<0.001$), postural hypotension ($p<0.001$) and reduced visual acuity ($p<0.001$) were also strongly associated with falls.

Conclusion

Multiple risk factors for falls were present in the study cohort, and many of those risk factors are modifiable. Therefore, interventions may be planned on an individual basis to reduce future risk of recurrent falls. The results of the study will be useful when developing future programmes for prevention as well. ■

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