



Risk of falling, fear of falling and factors restricting physical activity among older people

Falls are affecting both society and individuals. Risk factors and reasons for falling are multifactorial. With the ageing population preventative actions have an important role.

The population based GASEL survey includes data from 918 older people (middle age 72 years). The risk of falling was assessed using a new FRAT-Up index (Fall Risk Assessment Tool, Farseeing-project) with impact from 28 fall risk factors. Most (75%) of the seniors belonged to moderate fall risk group and 2% to high risk group. Among those aged 70 years or more over 13% were in the high risk group. Around 10% of seniors had fallen in the previous three months. Their fall risk was considerable higher compared to non-fallers. Among fallers 75% had fear of falling (Short-FES questionnaire) while among non-fallers the frequency was 51%. Typically those who had fear of falling belonged to the moderate or high fall risk groups. International FRAX-index for fracture risk evaluation correlated with FRAT-Up-index. It is notable, that these index share same risk factors.

Physical activity is included in FRAT-Up index. Physically active people have lower fall risk when compared to inactive people. When fear of falling was studied, 75% of physically inactive and 35% of active had fear of falling. Factor restricting physical activity among people with moderate or high fall risk were typically lack of interests, low mood, lack of sport skills or lack of knowledge, illness or injury, bad transportation connections, lack of suitable group, discomfort from physical activity, lack of information on nature related hobbies, and winter conditions. Among people aged over 80 years the typical restricting factors were tiredness, lack of sport skills or lack of knowledge, illness or injury, lack of group or councilor, discomfort from physical activity, shame, and winter conditions.

When aging, risk factors for falls and fractures accumulate affecting also our physical activity level. Evaluation of risks and preventative actions have impact for society and individuals. Physical activity and fall are in the focus of health and wellness supporting service designed in GASEL-project. The findings here are basis for recognition of risk groups, and for tailored information and services.

