

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PATTERN OF ACCIDENTAL FALLS AMONG ELDERLY IRANIANS: A PILOT STUDY.

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Background Falls are a common and often preventable cause of injury and death among older adults. Information about epidemiologic pattern of accidental falls is essential for developing prevention models and implementing effective interventions.

This study aimed at estimating the prevalence of falls and describing pattern and risk factors contributing to accidental falls among a sample of community-dwelling older adults in Tehran/ Iran.

Methods A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Tehran; the capital city of Iran. A total number of 61 individuals (30 people (49.2%) were men) aged 65 years or over were selected by simple random sampling from eligible people who live in 5 different districts with different socio-economic classes. Data regarding the number of falls occurrences in the past 12 months, as well as socio-economic circumstances, consequence of falls, physical activity level and Activities of Daily Living (ADL) were collected through face-to-face interviews using structured questionnaires at their home.

Results The prevalence of falls was 34.4 %, higher in women than in men and without association with age groups. The greatest proportion of falls' time, direction and location was falling after midday (PM), forward direction and home (inside and outside) location. The most prevalent cause of falls was losing balance. Injury as a result of the fall occurred mostly with minor injury; and did not required medical attention. We found chronic medical conditions, sensory loss, feet & footwear problems, physical functions and gait difficulties as main predictor factors for falls.

Conclusions Prevalence of falls is relatively high among the studied districts in Tehran. Falls prevention in the elderly should be considered as a major concern in the community.

Keywords Accidental Falls; Pilot study; Elderly people; Consequences