

Summary of Report : A Best Practices Guide for the Prevention of Falls Among Seniors Living in the Community

- This guide was prepared for the officials of the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors in response to the Ministers' request for a review of fall prevention programs and practices.
- The evidence for best practices was primarily derived from 34 studies.
- Each study was categorized into one of six sections according to the primary focus of the intervention:
 - 1) Exercise - evidence supports certain exercise regimes as a strategy for reducing falls
-balance training and use of Tai Chi exercises seemed to be the most effective
 - 2) Environmental Modification Best Practices – evidence suggests that including home modification as part of the program with financial assistance were the most successful
 - 3) Education Best Practices – education strategies may play an important role by increasing seniors' awareness and knowledge of fall risk factors, thereby making them more willing to adopt strategies to modify fall risk factors
 - 4) Medication Best Practices – benzodiazepines have been shown to increase risk of falling in seniors
-compliance in withdrawal of drugs can be very difficult and must find alternatives for anxiety and sleep disorders
 - 5) Clinical Intervention Best Practices – clinical assessments by nurses or physicians appear to be an effective strategy in reducing falls
-one study found that over ½ of emergency patients admitted with a fall had balance deficits and visual impairments
 - 6) Multi-Factorial Best Practices – multidisciplinary teams of health practitioners trained in the detection and prevention of fall risk factors are necessary to address the complex combination of factors that contribute to falls

Things to Consider

- Evaluation is critical
- Acceptability—we must change people’s behaviour or environment
- Feasibility-can program be successfully implemented, particularly concerning costs
- Sustainability-ability of program to continue after initial start up

Recommendations

- Access information form Safe Communities Partnership (Slips, Trips, Falls)
- FORCE project
- Referrals to lifeline
- Clients on service with CCAC and being assessed with RAI-HC tool to take immediate action for clients identified with falls or risk of falling ie. Refer to above, OT, LTP (if applicable), cognitive assessment, etc