WHO Report on Falls „Step Safely“
EUGMS SIG online meeting
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Conflicts of Interest:
Consultation: E. Lilly (Sarkopenie), BHCS, Philips, Gait up, Gaitrite, APDM,
Lectures honoraria: Amgen, Pfitzer, Nutricia
Fall prevention in 2020-2021

- WHO campaign (launch in May)
- Global working group on falls (Montero Odasso et al.)
- Landmark papers in NEJM (Bhasin and Lamb)
- Emerging new approaches
Step safely: strategies for preventing and managing falls across the life-course

History and background

Main findings and recommendations

Possible implications for geriatric medicine in Europe
History and Background

- Pre-existing WHO reports (Falls and Ageing)
  Editors D. Skelton and C. Todd

- Working group on current report started in 2014
  Dr. D. Meddings
  George Institute - Global Health, Sydney

  First meeting in Geneva, 2015
  Several iterations 2019-2020
  incl. several European experts

- Official launch April 26, 2021
Main Findings and Recommendations

- The burden of falls and the lasting consequences are major and often not recognized in many countries.

- The number of death caused by falls are increasing.

- The number of lifeyears with disability is paramount.

- Falls should be considered as a major target for public health campaigns.
FALLS ARE NOT AN INEVITABLE PART OF LIFE OR AGEING

684,000 DEATHS WORLDWIDE FROM FALLS EACH YEAR

- 2nd LEADING CAUSE of unintentional injury deaths
- MORE YEARS LOST WITH DISABILITY than from cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease combined
- 66% of deaths from falls are in low- and middle-income countries
- 172 MILLION years lived with disability from falls

FROM 2000 TO 2019 DEATHS FROM FALLS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY

INCREASE IN DEATHS FROM FALLS: 5.3%
INCREASE IN DEATHS FROM ALL INJURIES COMBINED: 6%

A SIGNIFICANT & GROWING GLOBAL HEALTH ISSUE

CAUSED BY INCREASES IN:

- Children & adolescents
- Workers
- Older people

THE STEPSAFELY REPORT EXPLORES & RATES EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO PREVENT FALLS SUCH AS:

- CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS
  - Home safety information for parents
  - Non-skid playground surfaces
- WORKERS
  - Non-slip footwear
  - Site safety regulations
- OLDER PEOPLE
  - Strength and balance training
  - Home assessment and modifications

World Health Organization
Main Findings and Recommendations

- **Lifespan approach**
  
  Liaise with other stakeholders

- Falls are a major health problem of older adults and children.

- It is fully acknowledged that older adults have the highest risk.

  From a global perspectives children must be addressed:

  - neighbourhood safety
  
  - life-space is diminished

  - loss of neuro-motor capacity in many regions
Main Findings and Recommendations

- **Inequality and access**

- The evidence of more than 200 RCTs is mainly from high income countries (HICs).

- The findings of systematic reviews and meta-analysis is biased from a global perspectives.

- Many programs such as OEP, LiFE, WEBB, Standing Tall are not affordable and sustainable for MICs and LICs (middle and low income).

- Programs are desperately needed for these regions.
Main Findings and Recommendations

- **Occupational Safety** (mainly MICs and LICs)

- Some working conditions are extremely hazardous and lead to many falls, fall related injuries including lethal falls.

- Examples are scaffolding, climbing trees

- Occupational safety should be a major pillar.
Main Findings and Recommendations

- **Older adults** (in HICs, most but not all European countries)

- The evidence is robust to recommend upscaling of programs.

- These recommendations include
  - regular progressive exercise of balance and strength
  - medication review
  - vision
  - adaptations of the build environment and neighborhood
Main Findings and Recommendations

- Older adults and settings
- Living in the community
- Living in care settings
- Falls in acute settings
Possible implications

- More than 80 % of all countries rely / build on WHO recommendations.

- It can be expected that many governmental bodies and health agencies will acknowledge the implementation gap.

- Due to the late COVID 19 situation the awareness is growing that mobility disability is growing and – hence – the risk of falling is increasing due to a loss of intrinsic motor capacity.

- The loss of physical activity due to COVID 19 is massive and threatens the independence.

- WHO is cross-referencing fall prevention to other guidelines such as WHO PA, bone health, assistive devices…
New horizons in falls prevention and management for older adults: a global initiative

Manuel Montero-Odasso 1,2,3, Nathalie van der Velde 4, Neil B Alexander 5, Clemens Becker 6, Hubert Blain 7, Richard Camicioli 8, Jacqueline Close 9,10, Leilei Duan 11, Gustavo Duque 12, David A Ganz 13, Fernando Gómez 14, Jeffrey M Hausdorff 15,16,17, David B Hogan 18, Jose R Jauregui 19, Rose Anne Kenny 20, Lewis A Lipsitz 21, Pip A Logan 22, Stephen R Lord 23,24, Louise Mallet 25, David R Marsh 26, Finbarr C Martin 27, Koen Milisen 28,29, Alice Nieuwboer 30, Mirko Petrovic 31, Jesper Ryg 32, Ervin Sejdic 33, Cathie Sherrington 34, Dawn A Skelton 35, Mark Speechley 3,36, Maw Pin Tan 37,38, Chris Todd 39,40, Tisha van der Cammen 41, Joe Verghese 42,43, Nellie Kamkar 1, Yanina Sarquis-Adamson 1, Tahir Masud 32,44, Task Force on Global Guidelines for Falls in Older Adults

Affiliations  + expand

PMID: 34038522  DOI: 10.1093/ageing/afab076
Water and Wine

Screening and Intervention to Prevent Falls and Fractures in Older People

Sarah E Lamb, Julie Bruce, Anower Hossain, Chen Ji, Roberta Longo, Ranjit Lall, Chris Bojke, Claire Hulme, Emma Withers, Susanne Finnegan, Ray Sheridan, Keith Willett, Martin Underwood, Prevention of Fall Injury Trial Study Group

A Randomized Trial of a Multifactorial Strategy to Prevent Serious Fall Injuries


PMID: 33211928  DOI: 10.1056/NEJMo2001500

PMID: 32640131  PMCID: PMC7421468  DOI: 10.1056/NEJMo2002183
Discussion points

Partnering

Networking

Value based approaches
Emerging new strategies

- EUGMS – October 2021
- Auckland fall prevention meeting – December 2021
- EU Falls Festival in Leuven – April 2022