

Mental and physical health problems in elderly people with problems of falls

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INTRODUCTION: The falls are very common in older people and result in increased morbidity of the elderly or even the death. However, the number of deaths is small compared to the number of various injuries which can arise. The most common injury, which usually does not directly lead to death, is the hip fracture. In most cases, people survive while after the fall, but have increased morbidity, reduction of daily activities, whatever they were before the injury, and loss of independence, and developed a strong feeling of fear.

AIM: The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of falls on the quality of life elderly people with a history of falls, especially in the aspect of physical and mental health.. To this end, a comparison between two groups of elderly, i.e., a group with a history of falls and a corresponding group without history of falls.

METHOD: The sample was 48 people who visited the Emergency Department of Patras University Hospital in December of 2016. It was used purposive sampling. Criterion participation were age (> 65 years). Research tool was the questionnaire of the World Health Organization WHOQOL-BREF. Finally, a comparison with the test t test for independent samples.

RESULTS: 39.6% of the sample were male and 61.4% female. The average age of the sample was $M = 75.89$ years. The majority of the sample were married (37.5%) or widowed (33.3%), 95.2% of the sample had social insurance and 93.8 lived in an urban environment. 82.9% had an informal caregiver, who normally was a child (29.2%) or partner (25%) of the elderly, but the majority of the sample (60.4%) is not lived with him. The monthly personal income of respondents was 639.5€ ($SD = \pm 362.9€$), while their monthly family income was 932.5€ ($SD = \pm 634.7€$). Comparing older with or without falls problems with their quality of life (Table 2) showed that patients without a history of falls have better mental health prices, better social relationships and greater satisfaction in relation to the living environment. Also, average values of the individual sectors of the Quality of Life of the first group is much smaller compared with healthy Greek population.

DISCUSSION: The results of the study show that the impact of falls on the quality of life of older people are particularly negative in the fields of social relations, environment and mental health, while less obvious is the impact on physical and general health. One possible explanation for this situation is that the burden falls on mental health of older people due to stress or fear experienced while contribute to social isolation because of the limitation of social contacts. Thus, the combination of fear of falls and reduce social contact creates the necessary framework for possible development of depression.

Reference:

- Michael, Y. L., Lin, J. S., Whitlock, E. P., Gold, R., Fu, R., O'Connor, E. A., . . . Lutz, K. W. (2010): *Interventions to Prevent Falls in Older Adults: An Updated Systematic Review*. Rockville (MD).
- Ginieri-Coccosis, M., Triantafillou, E., Tomaras, V., Soldatos, C., Mavreas, V., Christodoulou, G. (2012): Psychometric properties of WHOQOL-BREF in clinical and healthy Greek populations: Incorporating new culture-relevant items, *Psychiatriki*, 23 (2): 130-142.

	Frequency (N=48)	Percentage (%)	Statistical Differences
Sex:			
Men	19	39.6	
Women	29	60.4	
Marital Status:			
Unmarried	9	18.8	
Married	18	37.5	Fisher's Exact Test=.344 P=1.000
Divorced	5	10.4	
Widower	16	33.3	
Relationship with informal caregiver			
Child	14	29.2	
Husband	12	25.0	
Brother /Sister	3	6.3	Fisher's Exact Test=2.160 p=.900
Other relative	2	4.2	
Other	4	8.3	
They have no caregiver	13	27.1	
Cohabitation with informal caregiver			
Cohabitation	19	39.6	L.R.=0.99 p=.773
Non cohabitation	29	60.4	

	Elderly with a history of falls	Elderly without a history of falls	t	p
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Overall QoL / General health	55.31 (±26.68)	70.31 (±16.28)	-1.526	.134
Mental health	57.26 (±22.87)	74.45 (±15.81)	-2.022	.049
Physical health	56.65 (±22.13)	63.78 (±12.59)	-.879	.384
Social Relationships	32.88 (±26.33)	51.01(±12.40)	-3.031	.006
Environment	62,09 (±15,37)	73,83 (±10,35)	-2,060	,045

