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ASSESSMENT OF RISK OF FALLS IN THE ELDERLY AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS WITH FALLS

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Statement of the Problem: Falls are the most common cause of domestic accidents among the elderly. One of every three elderly age 65 and over who lives in the community falls once in every year. Main approach of falls management is to find out and to treat the underlying reason. The study aims to determine the history of falling in the last year and the factors associated with falls in patients aged 65 or older.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: The population of this cross-sectional study was 3163 elderly individuals who were living at the region of two randomly selected primary medical services (one at rural area, other at urban area) in April 2015. The sample size was calculated using the software of Epi info 7.0; thereby, 480 elderly individuals were enrolled. Each individual was randomly selected from his/her registration at the Manisa Public Health Department. All data were collected by face-to-face interview and a standardized questionnaire form that involved sociodemographic characteristics, health and social status, Katz index was used. The rate of participation was 88.9% (n=427). All data were evaluated using descriptive analysis and chi square test. Logistic regression was used for multivariate analysis.

Findings: The mean age of the study group was 72.9±6.7. The majority of individuals (86.4%) had a chronic disease for which continuous drug administration was required, 49.6% was women, 35.1% was graduated from elementary school and 23.4% was living alone. More than 79.4% of elderly could have done, daily living activities easily, less than 5% were depend in one or more basic activities of their daily life. When patients' fall experiences were questioned, it was determined that 30.4% of them had fallen in the last one year. Average number of falling of the study sample was 1.73±1.06. It was found that 43.1% of older people who reported falling history fell outside home, 36.3% fell by stumbling and 28.3% fell due to dizziness and 20.0% received medical treatment for falling at a hospital. Multivariate analysis demonstrated that the risk of falls are significantly higher in individuals who were living alone, being 75 years of age and over, having worse perceived health status, social isolation, insufficient income, lack of accessibility in health care, need of support during daily activities and had 2 and over chronic disease for which continuous drug administration was required.

Conclusion & Significance: These findings reveal that fall prevalence and risk factors that increase risk for falls are high in the individuals aged 65 or older. In order to prevent falls in the elderly, it is vital to perform assessments about risk factors for falls in elderly; and take preventive measures.

Biography

Beyhan Cengiz Özyurt is currently a PhD student in Health of the Elderly Program at Ege University under the department of Internal Medicine and concurrently working in Celal Bayar University under the department of Public Health. She has published more than 15 papers in reputed journals.

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