

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 5
May 2024

ISSN 0189 - 160X

WAJMJ

WEST AFRICAN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE

ORIGINALITY AND EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS *AND*
WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS



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Prevalence and Factors Associated with Fear of Falling in the Elderly Attending a Tertiary Hospital in South-South Nigeria

Prévalence et Facteurs Associés à la Peur de Tomber chez les Personnes Âgées Fréquentant un Hôpital Tertiaire dans le Sud-Sud du Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Fear of falling is a loss of confidence in balance which affects the quality of life of the elderly. Falls in older people can result in disability, death, financial stress on the family, and higher medical expenses. A significant proportion of those who fall are said to be afraid of falling. This study determined the prevalence and the factors associated with the fear of falling in the elderly attending the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital, Port Harcourt.

METHODS: This was a cross-sectional study of patients, 60 years and older, attending the Family Medicine clinic in the hospital. A questionnaire was used to collect data on the socio-demographic characteristics, history of chronic illness and lifestyle of the respondents. It also included the Modified Fall Efficacy scale to assess the fear of falling in the respondents and the functional assessment of the respondents was also carried out using the Timed Up and Go Test (TUG). Descriptive analysis and logistic regression were done to determine the factors associated with the fear of falling in the elderly.

RESULTS: A total of 292 patients consented to participate, Fear of falling was prevalent in 58 (19.9%) of the participants. The female gender was found to have 50% lower odds of having a fear of falling than their male counterparts (O.R.=0.541, 95% C. I=0.327-0.896.) An association was found between reduced frequency of physical activity and fear of falling. ($\chi^2=10.25$ P-value=0.006). An association was found between fear of falling and TUG as those with a fear of falling took a longer time to complete the TUG test

CONCLUSION: The study suggests that healthcare professionals should routinely investigate the fear of falling in geriatric care to devise preventive and intervention strategies to combat the fear of falling among the elderly. *WAJM 2024; 41 (5): 534 - 541*

Keywords: Fear of falling, Elderly, Fall prevalence, Timed up and go test, Modified fall efficacy scale.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: La peur de tomber est une perte de confiance en l'équilibre qui affecte la qualité de vie des personnes âgées. Les chutes chez les personnes âgées peuvent entraîner une invalidité, la mort, une pression financière sur la famille et des dépenses médicales plus élevées. Une proportion significative de ceux qui tombent est dite avoir peur de tomber. Cette étude a déterminé la prévalence et les facteurs associés à la peur de tomber chez les personnes âgées fréquentant l'Hôpital Universitaire de Rivers State, à Port Harcourt.

MÉTHODES: Il s'agissait d'une étude transversale des patients âgés de 60 ans et plus, fréquentant la clinique de médecine familiale de l'hôpital. Un questionnaire a été utilisé pour recueillir des données sur les caractéristiques sociodémographiques, les antécédents de maladies chroniques et le mode de vie des répondants. Il comprenait également l'échelle modifiée d'efficacité des chutes pour évaluer la peur de tomber des répondants et l'évaluation fonctionnelle des répondants a également été réalisée à l'aide du test Timed Up and Go (TUG). Des analyses descriptives et une régression logistique ont été effectuées pour déterminer les facteurs associés à la peur de tomber chez les personnes âgées.

RÉSULTATS: Un total de 292 patients ont consenti à participer, la peur de tomber était prévalente chez 58 (19,9 %) des participants. Le sexe féminin avait 50 % moins de chances d'avoir peur de tomber que leurs homologues masculins (O.R.=0,541, 95% C.I=0,327-0,896). Une association a été trouvée entre la réduction de la fréquence de l'activité physique et la peur de tomber ($\chi^2=10,25$, P-value=0,006). Une association a été trouvée entre la peur de tomber et le TUG, car ceux qui avaient peur de tomber mettaient plus de temps à terminer le test TUG.

CONCLUSION: L'étude suggère que les professionnels de la santé devraient systématiquement enquêter sur la peur de tomber dans les soins gériatriques afin de concevoir des stratégies préventives et interventionnelles pour combattre la peur de tomber chez les personnes âgées. *WAJM 2024; 41 (5): 534 - 541*

MOTS-CLÉS: Peur de tomber, Personnes âgées, Prévalence des chutes, Test Timed Up and Go, Échelle modifiée d'efficacité des chutes.

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