

FALL RISKS AND HOME SAFETY

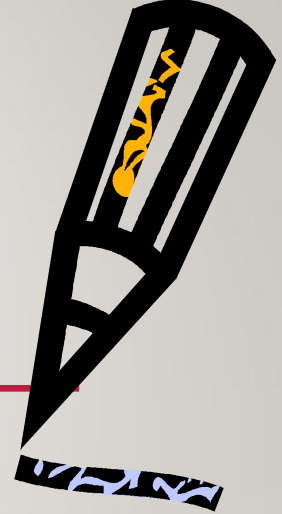
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES



- ✓ Identify the scope of the problem e.g. *impact of falls* in the elderly
- ✓ Describe the contributing factors for falls
- ✓ Address fall prevention, and intervention programs



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FALLS

- Unintentional injuries
- External causes of the injury
- Multifactorial causes

e.g. falls due to intrinsic factors vs. extrinsic factors



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HOW SERIOUS IS THE PROBLEM OF FALLS?



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INCIDENCE RATES OF FALLS IN U.S.

Per person annually

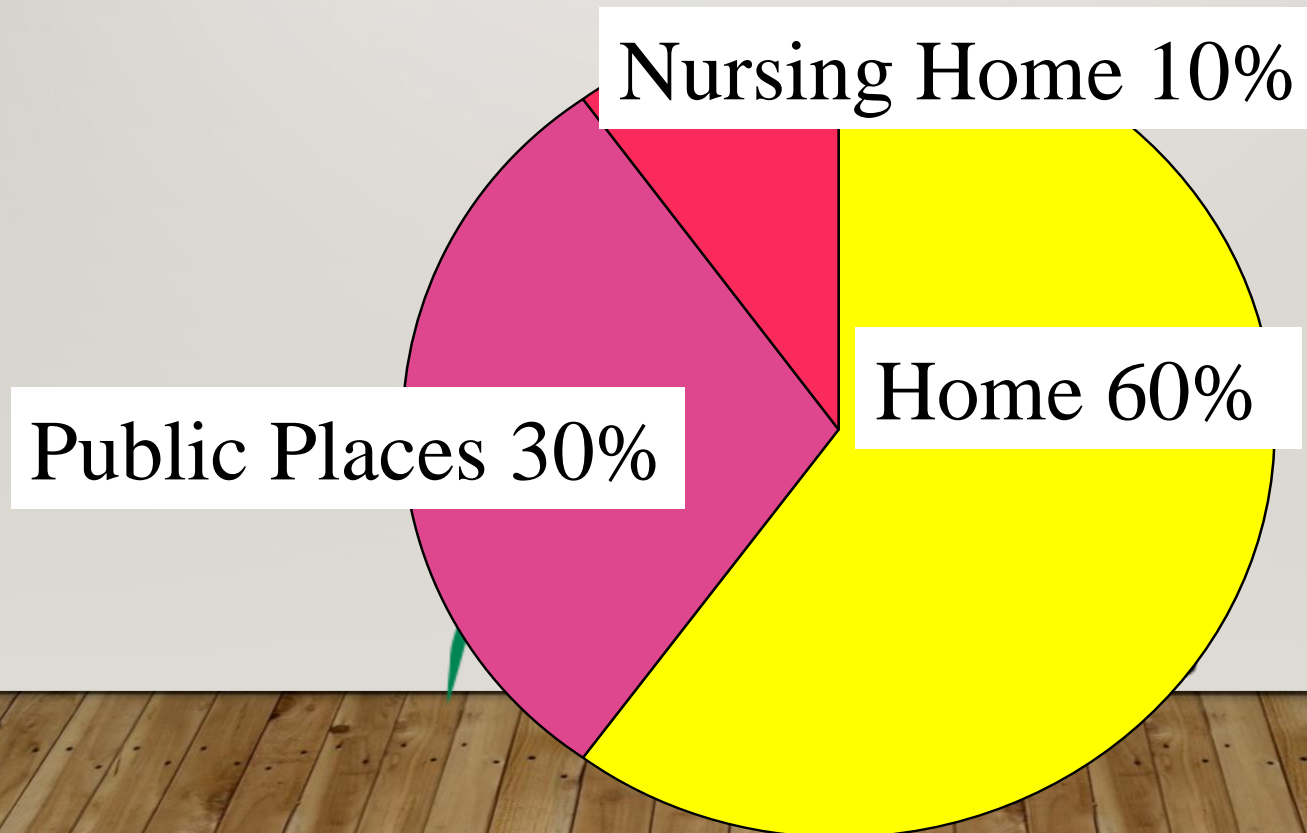
Community	0.2 - 0.8
Hospital	0.6 - 2.9
Long term- Care (per bed)	0.2 - 3.6



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WHERE ARE PEOPLE LIKELY TO FALL?

For people 65 years old or older.....



FRACTURES

- 3% of all falls cause fractures.
- Approx. 95% of hip fractures in older people aged over 65 years are the result of a fall
- People who have a hip fracture are 5 ~20% more likely to die in the first year following the injury than any other reason in the same age groups



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COMMON TYPES OF FRACTURES

- ✓ Forearm (Wrist) Fracture
- ✓ Spine Fracture
- ✓ Hip Fracture (pelvis, hip, femur)
- ✓ Ankle Fracture
- ✓ Upper arm, forearms, hand



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FEAR OF FALLING

- Loss of self confidence
- Decrease of physical activity level and quality of life
- Fear of not being able to get up after a fall



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INTRINSIC (PERSONAL) FACTORS FOR FALLS

- Aged (over 65 years)
- Female
- Low mobility or fragility – lower extremity weakness, and poor grip strength
- Functional impairments - limited Activities of Daily living (ADL)
- Poor gait and balance
- Low body weight



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- Cognitive impairment or dementia
 - Chronic illness
 - Parkinson disease, visual difficulties, stroke, hypertension, or urinary incontinence
 - Psychoactive medication
 - tranquilizers or antidepressants
 - Previous falls
 - Heavy drinking



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EXTRINSIC OR ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- Polypharmacy – four or more prescription medications combination
- Home hazards
 - Clutter, or loose rugs
 - Poor lighting on stairs and hallways
 - Lack of bathroom safety, e.g. grab bars in bathtub
- Footwear
- Busy street or elevated walkways



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FALL ITSELF

- Loss of footing or loss of traction
- ~~Changes of reflex with age~~
- Changes of muscle mass and body fat
- Loss of muscle strength
- Changes in vision and hearing
- Chronic conditions with medications



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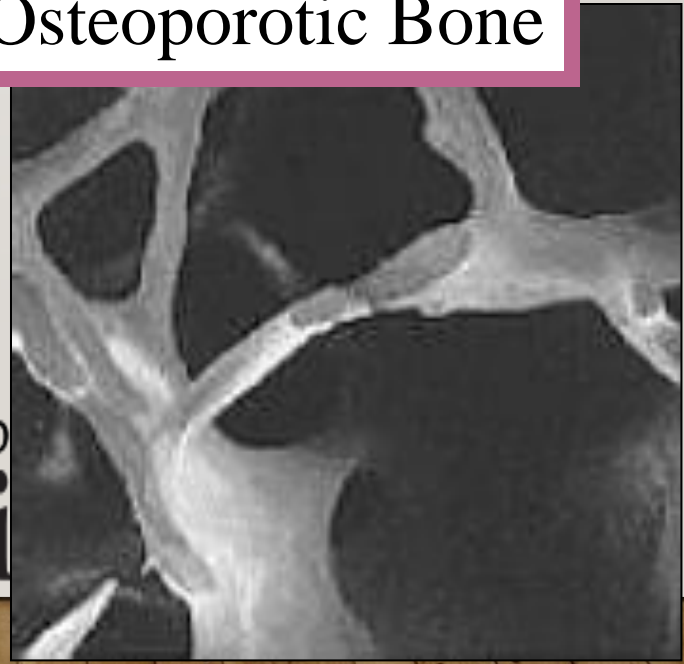
FRAGILE BONE

- Osteoporosis, or brittle bones
- Fall induced fractures

Normal Bone



Osteoporotic Bone



ASSESSMENT OF RISK

- “Get-up and Go” Test (Mathias et al., 1986)
 - ✓ Check for balance, gait, and mobility
- Review
 - ✓ Chronic medical conditions
 - ✓ Medications
 - ✓ Visions and hearing ability
 - ✓ Foot disabilities
- Evaluate environmental hazards
 - ✓ Home hazards



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PERSONAL PREVENTION

- ✓ Home Safety – Reducing hazards
 - ✓ Check for Safety List (CDC)
- ✓ Balance Exercise Lessen Fall impact – hip protectors
- ✓ Healthy Life Style



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ASSISTANT DEVICES

- Hip pads
- Mobility aids
 - Cane
 - Walkers
 - Wheelchairs
- Bathroom aids
 - Raised toilet seats
 - Grab bars



An elevated toilet seat and grab bars make getting on and off less difficult.



A bath bench lets you sit down while bathing.



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INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

- Exercise or physical therapy to increase/gain muscle strength, balance, and gait
- Assessment of home fall hazards
- Evaluation of medical condition, medications, and nutrition
- Support groups



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CONCLUSIONS

- Falls, and related injuries, e.g. fractures are significant health hazards to the aging society.
- Identifying fall risk factors help to evaluate the problems, and to plan personal, and community intervention strategy.
- Intervention studies has mostly focused on white men and women, and on hip fractures outcomes.



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RESOURCES

- [CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#)
- [National Resource Center on Aging and Injury](#)
- [WHO](#) –Ageing and Life Course
- [National Fire Protection Association](#)
- [National Women's Health Information Center](#)
- [Elder Web](#)
- [Additional Reading List](#)



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