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## Reducing the Fear of Falling through a Novel Fall Prevention Education Group

Eloise K. Palm  
Nova Southeastern University, ep1053@mynsu.nova.edu

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# Reducing the Fear of Falling through a Novel Fall Prevention Education Group

Eloise Palm- OTD-S

Katie Wright- OTR/L, Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital

## Introduction

- 1 in 4 older adults fall each year (Dellinger, 2017).
- Developing a FOF is an unfortunate consequence of falls (Flint et al., 2020).
  - Individuals with a fall history are 2.5 times more likely to report a FOF (Lavedán et al., 2018).
- Fall prevention education (FPE) is a useful tool to reduce the rate of falls by improving awareness and knowledge of fall prevention (Ong et al., 2021).
  - FPE delivered by a healthcare practitioner or a public health campaign is commonly perceived as “unnecessary and irrelevant” by the older adult population (Flint et al., 2020).
- Alternative novel methods of FPE may be more engaging and relevant for maintaining independence among the older adult population (Flint et al., 2020).

## Site Description

- Encompass Health
  - Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital located in Largo
  - Patient Population: brain injury, cardiac, stroke, orthopedic, amputation, spinal cord injury, and generalized deconditioning
  - Average Length of Stay: 2-3 weeks
  - 3 hours of therapy a day includes: OT, PT, & SLP



## Summary of Needs Assessment

- Baby boomers will create an influx of older adults requiring services at IPR's for various reasons, one of the more prevalent reasons being a fall (Dellinger, 2017).
- Older adults may be minimally participating in desired occupations because of physical abilities, their environment, or their fear of falling.
- Less than half of older adults report their falls. This could be because they are not aware they can prevent their falls, they think fall prevention strategies are not applicable to them, or they think their fall was due to something temporary that cannot be addressed (Dellinger, 2017).
- The methods in which fall prevention education has been delivered has been described as “unnecessary” by the individuals receiving it and has not left a beneficial impact on their lives moving forward (Flint et al., 2020).
- Delivery of FPE through a novel format, such as fall prevention bingo, may be the missing piece.



## Literature Review Summary

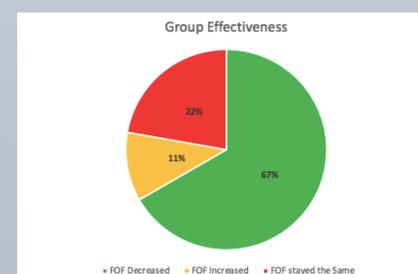
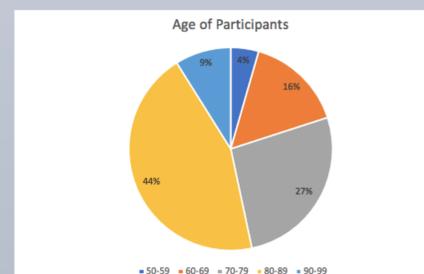
- Fear of Falling (FOF)-
  - The FOF can create a loss of confidence in one's self, this can lead to reducing activity levels which reduces physical status and social interactions. (Sherrington et al., 2020).
  - Previous falls have been proven to be predictors of falls due to the association with FOF (Lavedán et al., 2018). There is a need to address the FOF in order to help improve occupational engagement.
- Fall Risk Factors-
  - 28% of adults age 65 years and older experience a fall. The population is rapidly aging, placing a large portion of our population at a higher risk for falls simply due to age (Dellinger, 2017).
  - Specific Risk Factors:
    - Taking several different medications, balance impairments, gait abnormalities, vestibular dysfunction/dizziness, muscles weakness, vitamin D deficiency, mobility disorders, foot problems and footwear, postural hypotension, vision impairments, and environmental hazards (Dellinger, 2017).
- Fall Prevention Strategies-
  - Medication management, exercise, proper footwear, annual vision assessments, and home modifications (Dellinger, 2017), (Gladwin, 2018).
- Fall Prevention Education (FPE)-
  - FPE gives older adults the knowledge they need to independently evaluate their personal fall risk factors.
  - Common forms of FPE may include, educational booklets, mobile phone fall applications, or leaflets. However, these platforms of education have not been as successful as education with a novel delivery (Money et al., 2019).
  - Novel education gives its recipients increased knowledge of fall risks and behavioral strategies to reduce their personal risk for falls (Flint et al., 2020).
  - By delivering FPE in an interactive and familiar format (bingo), older adults were more engaged and motivated to learn about fall prevention as well as had increased knowledge of fall risks and behavioral strategies for fall prevention. (Flint et al., 2020).



## Capstone Project Description

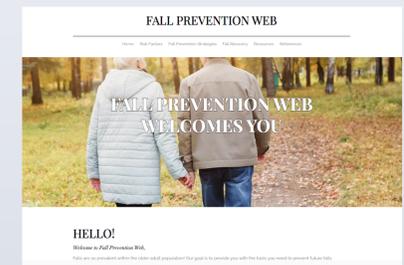
A novel fall prevention group created to educate participants on fall risks, fall preventions strategies, and fall recovery in hopes to reduce the FOF and increase engagement in desired occupations.

- Fall Prevention Group Layout-
  - Patient Screening: assessed reason for fall, fall risk status, cognition, and administered FES-I
  - Fall Prevention Group: introductions and sharing, fall prevention bingo with informal group discussion, post activity formal discussion, readministered FES-I
  - Group Participants: each group had 3 to 6 participants ranging from ages 55 to 96. 42% were male and 58% were female. Every participant had previously experienced a fall and had a fall risk. Patient diagnoses included traumatic brain injury, stroke, spinal cord injury, cardiac, orthopedic, and general debility patients.
  - Activity Grading: Cervical collars- patients were positioned further away from table in order to see bingo board and maintain spinal precautions, Macular Degeneration- patients were provided with magnifying glass
  - Frequency: The fall prevention education group was hosted once a week and lasted 60 minutes.
- Group Effectiveness-
  - 67% of participants had a decrease in FOF
    - However, only 24% of these participants transitioned from “high concern” to “moderate concern” on the FES-I
  - 11% of participants had an increase in FOF
  - 22% of participants FOF stayed the same



## Learning Objectives Achieved

- Researched the fear of falling and fall prevention activities/education
- Coordinated and led a fall prevention group weekly
- Assessed a patient's fear of falling pre- and post-group
- Facilitated discussion amongst group members to aid in the education of fall prevention
- Created and administered fall prevention education for patients including a packet and a fall prevention website
- Observed and participate in general OT interventions to reduce falls



## Implications for OT Practice

- Implementation of a novel fall prevention group may promote increase in occupational participation and play-based learning for older adults
  - Older adults benefit from interacting with peers and can learn new strategies from each other
  - Provision of comprehensive family education can advance knowledge and skills about falls and reduce falls at home
- Further examine the benefits of novel fall prevention groups and expand literature and services offered
  - Future students should implement a novel fall prevention group with emphasis on cognition to corroborate group program effectiveness with supporting data
- Impact on Site
  - Site would like to continue with fall prevention group for weekend therapy to continue to educate patients on fall prevention techniques for discharge home and/or into the community



## References & Acknowledgements

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References Available Upon Request