

Life after falling: Which factors better explain participation in community dwelling adults?

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Background

Participation is defined by WHO, as the person's involvement in a life situation¹. There are few studies exploring the association between participation restriction and being older, exhibiting more depressive moods, poor mobility, and a lack of balance confidence^{2,3}.

Objective

The objective of this study was to identify which factors, namely, age, functional capacity and self-efficacy for exercise have the best association with participation.

Methods

A sample of 168 community-dwelling adults (age ≥ 50 years), mean age $70,45 \pm 10,40$ years old (78,6% female), with history of at least one fall in the previous year, participated in the study. Measures included demographic variables, functional capacity, assessed by six functional tests: Grip strength, Timed Up and Go (TUG), 30 seconds Sit-to-Stand, Step test, 4 Stage Balance "modified" and 10 meters Walking Speed and two questionnaires (Self-efficacy for exercise and Activities and Participation Profile related to Mobility - PAPM). Descriptive and correlational statistics were performed to analyse data.

Results

Fifty-nine percent of participants presented restrictions in participation (34,8% mild restrictions, 17,4% moderate restrictions and 6,8% severe restrictions). Participation showed a strong correlation with 10 meters walking speed ($r=-0,572$) and TUG ($r=0,620$) for a significance level $p<0,001$. A moderate correlation was found between participation and 30 seconds Sit-to-Stand ($r=-0,478$), Step test ($r=-0,436$), Grip strength ($r=-0,397$), 4 Stage Balance test "modified" ($r=-0,334$), as well as, Self-efficacy for exercise ($r=-0,401$) and age ($r=0,330$), for a significance level $p<0,001$.

Conclusions

This study suggests that participation of individuals with history of fall is associated with functional capacity, self-efficacy for exercise and age. Previous studies have showed comparable findings^{4,5,6}, however, admitting the strong association between participation and 10 meters Walking Speed and TUG, it is essential to include these instruments in a comprehensive evaluation of the individuals who have suffered a fall in the past year to predict participation restrictions. The performance assessed, in few minutes, by these tests, will gather information about balance and mobility impairments, that associated with a quick assess of Self-efficacy for exercise⁷ will outline the quality of life of persons with history of fall.

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Keywords

Participation; Community-dwelling adults; Falls; Functional capacity; Self-efficacy for exercise