

Stand Up Right – Stay Upright!

Evidence into Practice

Introducing falls risk assessment to General Practice.
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Approaches to the evidence

By incorporating a falls prevention focus within the Enhanced Primary Care, Health Assessment MBS Item, the project aimed to help GPs identify clients at risk of falling prior to a fall occurring.

A falls risk assessment tool *QuickScreen*®, developed by Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute, was provided to four general practices in northern Tasmania.

By linking *QuickScreen*® to the Health Assessment protocol, clients were routinely assessed and changes in practice could develop from evidence gathered within the organisation.

Obtaining the evidence

With the support of a Division of General Practice, initial discussions took place with practice managers and/or practice nurses.

QuickScreen® was then integrated with the Health Assessment as conducted by the practice nurse. Physical assessment provided information about physical capability.

Use of *QuickScreen*® also provided a formal framework for assessing and managing the multidisciplinary needs of at-risk clients.

Use of *QuickScreen*® assisted practice nurses to develop confidence and expertise in falls prevention, facilitating professional dialogue.

The evidence for change

A total of 111 clients were assessed using *QuickScreen*®, with a mean total risk factor of three (See Figure 1).

Total risk increases as the number of risk factors present increases (See Table 1).

Three risk factors present in more than half of clients assessed were: taking four or more medications; near tandem stand, and low contrast vision (See Table 2).

Table 2: Presence of risk factors for clients ≥ 75 years

| Risk Factor Present | Number of Clients |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Four or more medications | 70 (63%) |
| Near tandem stand | 65 (59%) |
| Low contrast vision | 58 (52%) |
| Tactile sensitivity | 41 (37%) |
| Previous falls | 37 (33%) |
| Sit to stand | 33 (30%) |
| Alternate step | 26 (23%) |
| Any psychotropic medications | 16 (14%) |

n=111

Evidence into practice: Key learnings

Client management needs to be inclusive of multidisciplinary approaches that may involve non-medical interventions.

Client management relates to individual GP and practice nurse knowledge and availability of local multidisciplinary resources.

We identified a need for more detailed clinical and background educational material.

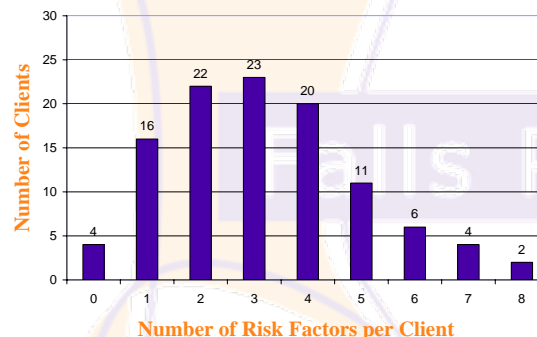
Evidence into practice: The future

The next phase of the project will develop clinical and background falls prevention material; identify localised multidisciplinary resources to assist GPs in the management of at-risk clients, and aim to improve the accessibility and uptake of such resources.

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*Project partners:
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Figure 1: What the Tool found



**Table 1: Total risk increase
(*QuickScreen*® Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute)**

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Number of risk factors | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5+ |
| Total risk increase | 1 | 1.4 | 2.1 | 4.7 | 8.7 | 12 |