

Falls affecting quality of life

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Objectives: Falls are important causes of hospital admissions, injury and even death among the elderly population; people don't fall because they get older. There is more than one underlying cause involved in a fall and often incompletely investigated and treated, affecting the quality of life (QoL) of patients and caregivers. Methods: We conducted a prospective study on 71 consecutive patients which were admitted in our clinic as a result of a fall. The mean age was 77 years (61-93). We tried to identify the leading cause for falling and the consequence on QoL. Results: The causes for our patients' falls were: stroke, vertigo and balance difficulties, Parkinson's disease, polyneuropathy, vision problems, arthritis and other orthopaedic problems, seizures, postural hypotension, environmental factors. Only 34 patients had a single cause for falls, 37 of them had 2 or more factors that caused falls. Almost all the patients needed a multidisciplinary medical team to pass the consequences of their fall. Conclusion: Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. Falls, even without any injury, have a psychological impact on patients. They become afraid of falling again. The fear was increased by the number of falls. QoL is affected in the same proportion by the physical consequence of falls (trauma, fractures, haematomas, pain) as well as by anxiety, reducing the motility and activity of the patients and increasing their dependence on caregivers. A multidisciplinary team is necessary to prevent and treat consequences of falls in elderly.