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Falls Among Older Adults

More than one-third of adults ages 65 years and older fall each year (Hornbrook 1994; Hausdorff 2001).

Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths (Murphy 2000) and the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma (Alexander 1992).

Falls Related Outcomes

In 2002, nearly 13,000 people ages 65 and older died from fall-related injuries (CDC 2004). More than 60% of people who die from falls are 75 and older (Murphy 2000).

Among people ages 75 years and older, those who fall are four to five times more likely to be admitted to a long-term care facility for a year or longer (Donald 1999).

Falls are a leading cause of traumatic brain injuries (Jager 2000).

Among older adults, the majority of fractures are caused by falls (Bell 2000).

Approximately 3% to 5% of older adult falls cause fractures (Cooper 1992; Wilkins 1999). Based on the 2000 census, this translates to 360,000 to 480,000 fall-related fractures each year.

Medical Costs

In 2000, direct medical costs totaled \$179 million dollars for fatal and \$19.5 billion dollars for nonfatal fall injuries (Stevens 2005, in press).

Cost of Falls Leading to an Emergency Room Visit (broken down by state) (AARP 2002)
http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/ib56_falls.pdf

Risk Groups

White men have the highest fall-related death rates, followed by white women, black men, and black women (CDC 2004).