

PUTTING ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER:

Promoting Independence and Preventing Falls Through InSTEP Model Projects

InSTEP | Increasing Stability Through Evaluation & Practice

We know from scientific studies that falls can be prevented. The most effective programs have included identification and reduction of fall risk factors, structured exercise programs and home safety modifications. Yet we still need to learn the optimal intensity of these components and how best to assure older people's participation. In response, FPCE has worked with community senior centers in Southern California to develop and test six different multifactorial InSTEP model programs.



InSTEP Program Components

- Each InSTEP model program includes a structured exercise program and assessment of medical- and home-risks.
- Some of the model programs also include a motivational discussion group.

Target Audience

- Older adults at moderate to high risk for falls

Numbers

- 10-15 participants in each program rotation
- 180-200 participants in total

Timeframe

- 12-week program rotation

Research Questions

Multifactorial fall prevention programs that include a thorough assessment of fall risk, targeted exercise, and home modification have been shown to reduce falls in older adults at high risk for falls in randomized clinical trials. What we do not yet know, however, is whether these same types of programs will also work in real world community settings or what types of resources (personnel and financial) are needed to effectively operate and sustain them. The InSTEP program is currently being tested in six community sites in Los Angeles and Orange counties to address these important questions.



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Program Models Vary According to Their Intensity

InSTEP Models

High-Intensity

- Fall risk screen by physician
- Structured balance and mobility class led by specially trained exercise professional
- Home evaluation and follow-up by occupational therapist with referral for home modification

Medium-Intensity

- Fall risk screen by trained social worker or case manager
- Multimodal exercise program led by exercise professional
- Home evaluation and follow-up by trained social worker or case manager with referral for home modification

Low-Intensity

- Self-administered fall risk checklist
- Home exercise program monitored by senior center staff
- Self-administered home assessment with information on home modification resources

Half of the sites also include a Fall Prevention Discussion Group led by trained older adult volunteers.

Preliminary Program Outcomes

Early findings show improvements in balance and mobility and an improved understanding of risk factors associated with falls. Research is currently on-going to examine the long-term effects of the InSTEP model programs on fall-risk behavior and fall incidence rates.

What Participants and Staff Say About InSTEP

- InSTEP made me aware of falling hazards both within my home and in other environments and how to take steps to prevent them.
- I enjoyed learning various techniques that will help prevent me from falling during everyday activities.
- InSTEP has raised participants' interest and awareness. People are talking about falls, sharing fall incidents with others, and have developed heightened interest in exercise.
- The InSTEP program has helped boost participants' self confidence and realize that they are capable of living independently in the comforts of their own home.

