

Falls in older adults with mental illness



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Aim

The aim of this research paper is to examine the cases of falls in older adults mainly due to the mental illness. The decreasing level of mental health in older adult is a primary reason of fall leading to multiple serious injuries. The research paper will analyze the role of mental illness in causing the falls in older adults.

Objective

This study establishes the fact that mental illness in older adults is responsible for a fall causing major injuries, which can prove fatal. This study further investigates the various preventive measures which can be adopted to prevent the fall of mentally older adults.

Introduction

Human body is the complex machine ever made. Like machines, Human body is also prone to wear & tear. The phenomenon of ageing in human being is universally known. With increase in age, body's resistivity decreases, thus many old age problems arises. With the advancements of medical technology, human life expectancy has been increased from 50 years to 65 years. The possibility of leading a healthier life after 50 years is possible which was not possible in earlier days (Rowe & Kahn 1987 1997). Increased health education, various financial programmes & better care of human body has increased the average life of a human to 70 or 80 years. But with increased age, certain chronic diseases are bound to happen. It is true that due to best medical practices human life has increased but human

body being a part of nature has its own fate. With increased life expectancy, we can see a lot of older active members in our today's society. With increase in active older adults, there is a subsequent increase in adults with mental & physical problems as well (Zarit, Johansson & Malmberg 1995).

Mental problems are the result of social dilemma in older adults. Many cases are recently divorced male & female, sometimes the loss of near and dear ones plunges one into darkness. Despite all the best of technological advancements and innovative medical treatments, the mental well being of older adult people is declining (Zarit & Zarit 2012). The solidarity living, unable to socialize are also seen as few causes of mental illness. Older adults, sometimes divorcee or single suffering from mental disorder become victim of fall, due to losing of consciousness. The fall is a major reason of unintentional injuries (Sattin 1992). A faller is a person who falls, which is usually more than once in case of mentally ill people. The fall, induced by mental illness is increasing day by day. Hospitalization due to fall is increasing in the age group of 55-65 years (Heslop et. Al. 2012). Fall resulted to mental disorder leads to major injuries. Depression due to single living style is a major reason causing the mental imbalance. The loss of confidence due to multiple falls in patient with high level of mental disorder is seen in patients who fall at least three times in a year. Due to singular living style being popular these days, people are unable to mingling socially, a patient suffering from mental disorder will remain unhealthy until his atmosphere gets changed. Easing out the feeling of depression in people is the first cure of mental illness which doesn't usually happens these days until you visit a doctor.

Literature review

The social confinement of living alone is a major cause of increasing mental illness and subsequent fall of patients (Treas 1995). Although, the fall is a resultant of both external factors as well internal. Change in environment, Affect of Drugs or any labour intensive activity performed under harsh condition can also lead to fall (Nyberg 1996). Mental well being is often attributed to heavy drug intake, which leads to dizziness. Intuitional admittance is often regarded as a remedy to prevent any fatal injury but falls are in increasing number by two - third to those people who are under institutional care (Bergland et. al. 1998). Mental well is often regarded something which comes with age, but that is not the usual case. Certain minor or mid aged adults too have shown sign of mental illness, although number of fall accidents in not serious in this age group. Mental illness deteriorates with increasing age resulting in increasing number of fall as age increases, which increases the number of hospitalized cases due to fall (Mathers et. al. 1998).

Prevention is the best remedy to cure the mental illness as well as to prevent any serious injury due to fall. The mental illness can be caused to various factors including generic inheritance (Sellers et. al. 2012). Although several researches have been done on the cause of mental illness but nothing specific is researched on fall as a result of mental instability. Also fall is not the direct resultant of mental illness, it's the after affect of various drugs that patient take as a cure of mental illness. A recently concluded report find linkages of mental illness with other age related diseases also (Griffin 2013). Risk assessment should be the specific case while dealing a patient with

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multiple disorders. Considering the less neighbourhood friendly nature of our modern living, a single person is always prone to mental imbalance. A woman who is a divorcee and now lives single is more prone to mental illness (Schoevers et. al. 2006). The risk of depression is much greater than compared to the one living in a joint family. Fall in the case of single living patient is more serious. Delay in hospitalization can lead to death of a patient in case if nobody reports to the hospital which usually can happen if you are living alone. A faller falling at multiple times in a year is more prone to neurological disorder (Nevitt et. al. 2006).

Fall is often related to the depression and mental unconsciousness of a person. A subsequent increase in the order of fall can increase the mental depression (Krishnaswamy n. d.). The Australian Commission of Safety & Quality in Health care has established that treatment of fall can be useful in treating multiple illnesses. The guidelines issued by them include the risk assessment test to be done for person crossing a threshold level of age. Certain literature focuses on preventive measures with regard to spatial planning, lighting ambiance & user friendly approaches of the houses to be designed for older adults.

Identifying the gaps

Although separate studies and researches have been done on various effect of fall, the specific reason of fall in mental disturbed patient is not been studied. A direct link needs to be established between the mental illness and fall. This further should be analyzed on the increasing rate of mental illness with age groups and duration of fall period. Moreover, the physical

assessment of a faller needs to be done as to what is he doing at the time of fall, what's the mental stress level during his falls & at what time of the day is the fall occurring. Any literature which can establish direct link of mental illness on a fall of a person is not been done. A study needs to be focused on establishing preventive measure which can be under taken by the patient at spatial level in order to minimize the injuries. This gap is to be answered by the medium of this research paper, with specific need of establishing time & occurrence of fall in mentally ill people. Although separate qualitative analysis needs to be done for patients live in the institutional care and those living in individual homes.

Formulating research question

How mental illness linked to the fall of older adult's people?

Specifying the significance

The cases of fall are increasing with the increase of age & life expectancy. Increasing level of segregation at neighbourhood level has become a way of living. Reporting of fall in case of mentally ill people living single is more important. This research study is important as it will establish a direct link between mentally ill people to their fall, considering the fact that mentally ill people often don't relate their fall to the mental illness. Risk assessment is also a main focus of this study, as the fall cases are often increases with the increase of age. The research is important owing to the fact that mental illness goes unnoticed despite subsequent fall, that too for the patients living in the institutional care.

Bibliography