

Exercise in elderly proven to improve quality of life

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A new study appearing in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* compares the efficacy of three programs designed for reducing falls and improving quality-of-life among the elderly; education, home safety assessment and modification (HSAM) and exercise training. The study also examines the secondary effects of these programs on functional balance, daily activity, fear of falling and depression level, finding that exercise training yields the most significant improvements.

Participation in the study was open to people aged 65 years and older who had required medical attention for a fall within the previous four weeks. Participants were assigned to one of the three fall prevention program groups, and quality of life was then assessed according to the World Health Organization's Quality of Life guidelines, focusing on four domains; physical capacity, psychological well-being, social relationships and environment.

Although all programs appeared to lead to some improvement in quality of life, improvements were significantly greater in the exercise training group. Exercise training participation also led to improvements in functional reach, balance and fear of falling.

“The quality of life benefits reflect not just health states, but also how patients perceive and value the health- and non-health-related aspects of their conditions before and after receiving an intervention,” says Dr. Mau-Roung Lin, co-author of the study. These measures may therefore be beneficial for selecting interventions that are of optimal value to older

people.

Source: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

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