

# Researchers examine fall prevention efforts for seniors

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Two NDSU researchers have published a paper giving high marks to a program designed to help aging adults prevent falls.

Sean Brotherson, professor and NDSU Extension family science specialist, and Jane Strommen, assistant professor of practice and NDSU Extension aging specialist, annually assess the effectiveness of the Stepping On program. The fall prevention effort is a collaboration of the NDSU Extension Service, state health department and community partners.

Together with Zhen Yang, a former NDSU developmental science graduate student, Brotherson and Strommen wrote an article titled "Older Adult Knowledge and Behavior Change in the Stepping On Fall Prevention Program in A Community Setting," published in the Journal of Human Sciences and Extension's October 2017 issue.

According to the abstract, one out of every three Americans age 65 and over falls at least once each year, making fall-related injuries among [older adults](#) a major public health concern. Prevention of falls has emerged as a key issue, and Stepping On is an evidence-based fall prevention program designed to help older adults take control of fall risk factors, explore different behaviors and reduce the risk of falling.

The study shared evaluation findings conducted with 182 Stepping On participants who took part in 21 workshops from 2013 to 2015. Older adults in the program demonstrated high satisfaction with program

quality, positive knowledge results related to fall risk factors and prevention and substantial follow-through on behavioral steps to minimize fall risk.

"Our study highlighted the partnership between NDSU Extension and state and local partners in efforts to use education to address a significant health concern for older adults," Strommen said. "The positive findings suggest the value of such partnership efforts in reducing risks to older adults and implementing safety strategies to help maintain independence and quality of life for seniors."

The researchers said participants also shared positive feedback about the program in their responses to open-ended questions.

"Falls are a leading cause of injury and death for adults over the age of 65, and may result in hip or joint injuries, head trauma, mobility challenges, fear and anxiety," Brotherson said. "This study is important because it shows that the Stepping On [program](#) significantly increases knowledge of fall risk factors and how to prevent them. Also, participants become more likely to practice steps to prevent falls, which assists in reducing [falls](#) and also saves money in the health care system and the community."

The study concluded that programs designed to reduce fall risk factors and enhance the quality of life can be a critical tool to help older [adults](#), educators and community leaders address the issue.

**More information:** Older Adult Knowledge and Behavior Change in the Stepping On Fall Prevention Program in A Community Setting, [docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c8fe6e ... b71c422f0634f25b.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c8fe6e...b71c422f0634f25b.pdf)

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