

Earlier falls predict subsequent fractures in postmenopausal women

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The risk of fracture in postmenopausal women can be predicted by history of falls, according to new findings from the Kuopio Osteoporosis Risk Factor and Prevention Study (OSTPRE) at the University of Eastern Finland. Published in *Osteoporosis International*, the study is the first to follow up on the association between history of falls and

subsequent fractures.

Falls in the elderly are common, resulting in [fractures](#) and other serious health consequences. In people aged 65 years or over, falls are the leading cause of injury-related death and hospitalization. Fall-induced injuries cause a substantial economic burden worldwide.

Conducted at the University of Eastern Finland and Kuopio University Hospital, the study comprised 8,744 [women](#) whose mean age at the beginning of the study was approximately 62 years. The study started in 1999 with an inquiry asking the study participants about their [history](#) of falls in the preceding 12 months. The researchers wanted to know how many times the study participants had fallen, what had caused the falls and how severe the falls had been; i.e., did they lead to injuries that required treatment. A follow-up inquiry was conducted in 2004, asking the study participants about any fractures they had suffered during the five-year follow-up. The self-reported fractures were confirmed from [medical records](#).

Nearly one in five women reported a fall during the preceding 12 months. The risk of fracture was 41 percent greater in women who had reported a fall in comparison to those who hadn't. Slip falls were associated with a greater risk of subsequent fracture than falls caused by other reasons. Furthermore, injurious falls predicted future fractures: the risk of fracture was 64 percent higher in women who had experienced an injurious fall. In particular, earlier injurious falls predicted other fractures than those typically associated with osteoporosis.

More information: N. Afrin et al. A fall in the previous 12 months predicts fracture in the subsequent 5 years in postmenopausal women, *Osteoporosis International* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s00198-019-05255-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00198-019-05255-5)

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