

App will reduce high risk of falls during and after lockdown

May 21 2020



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A free app has been developed at the University of Manchester to help reduce the high risk of falls and physical decline in older people self-isolating during the COVID-19 lockdown.

When used, the evidence-based app—called Keep-On-Keep-Up- will

help reduce the thousands of injuries—which are often serious and sometimes fatal—in the over 65's caused by falls.

Falls are the leading cause of accidental death in older people; costs to NHS exceed £2.3 billion and in US \$50 billion per year according to NICE.

Around a third of people aged over 65 and half of people aged over 80 fall at least once a year.

Studies have shown that strength and [balance](#) based exercises reduce falls by up to 42%, yet levels of exercise are generally low without therapist input.

Current provision for digital strength and balance exercise resources generally have poor engagement with no means of tracking usage or progress.

The app provides personalised strength and balance exercises with an animated in-app trainer called, "Wilf." It also uses health literacy games to increase awareness of home safety, importance of hydration, and ways to improve bone health and nutrition.

Principal Investigator Dr. Emma Stanmore from The Healthy Ageing Research Group at The University of Manchester said: "COVID-19 has confined many of the 12 million older adults aged 65 and above in the UK to their homes for a long period of time

"Because many are already housebound and frail, they may have already been at risk of decline

"This increased sedentary behaviour can lead to impaired mobility, muscle deconditioning and poor balance which can increase falls and

have a negative impact on physical and mental health."

The app, developed by working with older people, will utilise the increasing numbers of them who have become more tech savvy during the pandemic.

Internet use and video calling has surged in the older 65s as they have found ways to stay connected with loved ones during the pandemic.

Dr. Stanmore said: "KOKU is an evidence-based, gamified app designed to help improve strength, balance and optimise healthy ageing, of particular use during the COVID-19 pandemic in a fun and interactive way.

"It is designed to be used independently by older adults and based on best evidence for maintaining function and reducing falls.

"But it also includes health literacy games to increase awareness of home safety, importance of hydration, and ways to improve bone health and nutrition."

She added: "It's particularly relevant for [older adults](#) concerned about their risk of physical decline and wanting to remain independent at home

"But it's also helpful for care home staff looking for interactive ways to engage [older residents](#) with simple, or people concerned about ageing relatives or friends who may be at risk of falls or frailty."

More information: For more information, see kokuhealth.com/

Provided by University of Manchester

Citation: App will reduce high risk of falls during and after lockdown (2020, May 21) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-05-app-high-falls-lockdown.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.