

Falls the leading cause of injury among older adults in China

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Falls are the most common injury for both urban and rural elderly in China, responsible for more than two-thirds of all injuries in people 65 and older, according to a new study by researchers from China and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for Injury Research and Policy. This is the first study to uncover the leading causes of non-fatal injuries among older adults in China, who make up 9 percent of the total population. The report is available on the Website of the journal *Injury Prevention*.

The researchers also examined the most common places of [injury](#) occurrence and the influence of [marital status](#) on injury. More than 70 percent of all injuries occurred in the home or in the street, with public buildings being the third most common place of injury for rural residents. Marital status was found to be a significant predictor of sustaining an injury; specifically, the divorced and widowed had 4.6 and 2.2 times the risk of injury, respectively, as elderly who were single.

"The identification of the most common locations and causes of injury is useful for the development of interventions and priorities," said Susan P. Baker, MPH, professor with the Injury Center. "The results indicate the divorced and widowed elderly should be targeted as high-risk groups for injury. Prevention programs for all major causes of injury need to be developed as soon as possible in China."

The researchers analyzed data from the 2008 National Health Services Survey of China, conducted once every five years to help the

government understand the need for and supply of health services. The survey is administered through face-to-face interviews with representatives from over 56,000 households.

"Importantly, 2008 marked the first year the National Health Service in China has included injury in their survey," said Guoqing Hu, PhD, lead study author and associate professor of epidemiology and [health statistics](#) at Central South University in [China](#). "This is an important milestone, and we hope it signifies greater investment in injury control moving forward."

Provided by Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health

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