

# Comment: “Prevalence of falls in elderly people: a population based study”

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In the article “Prevalence of Falls in Elderly People: A Population Based Study”<sup>1</sup>, the authors discuss a matter of high importance for the population because falls cause high morbidity and mortality in this age group and still considerably encumber health services and its employees. Based on a population-based cross-sectional study of appropriate methodological rigor, it sought to identify significant risk factors, so that it is possible to act in prevention, and found 28.9% (95% CI 22.8 to 35.0) falls in a sample of 211 elderly people in the municipality of Rio Grande in the past year. After adjustment for confounding factors, only the variables of females ( $p=0.01$ ), living alone ( $p=0.04$ ), regular or poor self-perception of health ( $p=0.03$ ), and obesity ( $p=0.01$ ) remained statistically significant associations<sup>1</sup>.

In contrast, a similar study previously conducted in Porto Alegre evaluated 267 elderly individuals and found the following risk factors as predisposing to falls: higher age range; poor self-perception of the vision and poor self-perception of health and sight; elderly individuals who reside at home, and monthly income equal to or less than one minimum wage<sup>2</sup>. Another descriptive study, conducted in Brasilia,

included 83 elderly women and found no statistically significant relationship between age, sociodemographic factors, dizziness, psychotropic medication, poor perception of health and sight, and presence of depression with the phenomenon of falling. However, these were related to the condition of body balance, assessed by the Functional Range Test and the Tinetti Balance and Gait Score, suggesting that these tests may be used to evaluate and identify improvements in body balance after training<sup>3</sup>.

Given the seriousness of the topic “falls among the elderly”, we highlight the importance of studies of this nature to direct more attention to the health of the elderly and better define education programs.

## REFERENCES

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