

Medication-Related Falls in Older People

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Editors

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Causative Factors and Management Strategies

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Preface

The aging of the world population is highlighting the problems encountered by older people as they seek health care. Medication use is a double-edged sword: the beneficial effects of drug therapy must be balanced against potential and real side effects that drugs can cause in older patients. The situation is made more complex for individual patients because of the multiple factors involved, such as the physiologic changes in the body due to aging processes, the accumulation of comorbidities, and the use of drugs to manage various conditions and symptoms. Falls are a dreaded event in older people. It can affect a person biologically, resulting in soft tissue and bony trauma including fractures, psychologically resulting in fear of falling and mental health well-being resulting in depression. The identification of and reduction in fall risks in older people is a worldwide concern. Falls (or the reduction in their numbers) are a ubiquitous quality measure of health care delivery. Medication use is an important and potentially modifiable factor. This book serves as a repository of knowledge and scientific evidence concerning medications and their effects on falls risk. The book will inform readers of the complexity of the issue of medication-related falls in older people and provide strategies for its management. The target audience for this book includes (1) health professionals with an interest in researching and caring for older people, (2) managers of institutions or health systems, (3) policy-makers and health system funding decision-makers, and (4) the general public seeking high-quality information on this topic – especially those individuals with aging parents who have experienced falls or medication problems. This book will not be able to provide a single solution to this important clinical problem because of its complexity. Perhaps in the future, as a convergence of genomics, proteomics, and therapeutics occurs, health science may be able to optimize medication use in each individual person to minimize the risk of side effects and adverse events.

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