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Fall Risk Reduction Using Lifestyle-integrated Functional Exercise (LiFE)

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Abstract

As the population and longevity of older adults' increases, the prevalence of falls is becoming an ever-growing issue. Falls in older adults may lead to sedentary behavior, decreased independence, and lower quality of life. Evidence has shown that traditional exercise programs emphasizing strength and balance can decrease the fall risk in older adults, but may be difficult to sustain over time. Emerging evidence suggests that exercises that are integrated into daily life, as seen in the Lifestyle-integrated Functional Exercise (LiFE) program, may have a more lasting effect in reducing fall risk in older adults. This study explored the effectiveness of a 26-week modified-LiFE program in decreasing fall risk in community-dwelling older adults.

Purposive sampling of men and women 65 years and older, with or without a history of falls, living at two retirement communities yielded 16 participants. Participants were assessed three times using a battery of six fall risk assessments. Results demonstrated a significant reduction in fall risk, and increase in strength and balance. Additionally, results showed a trend toward sustainability of exercise. Therefore, integrating exercises into daily life may offer occupational therapists an effective occupation-based intervention that promotes safety, independence, and quality of life for older adults.