

# The Impact of Fall Efficacy on Occupational Performance in Community-Dwelling Older Adults

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background:

- Falls affect one-third of adults annually and are the leading cause of death for older adults (OA) (Ambrose, Paul, & Hausdorff, 2013 & He, Goodkind, & Kowal, 2016).
- Fall Efficacy (FE) is the confidence a person has in his/her ability to complete a task without falling (Tinetti & Powell, 1993).
- Low FE restricts OA's participation in ADLs, IADLs, leisure activities, and social participation (Jung et al., 2015).
- Our literature revealed many fall prevention interventions focus on physical factors, however, learning more about the psychological components that contribute to falls may also improve outcomes.

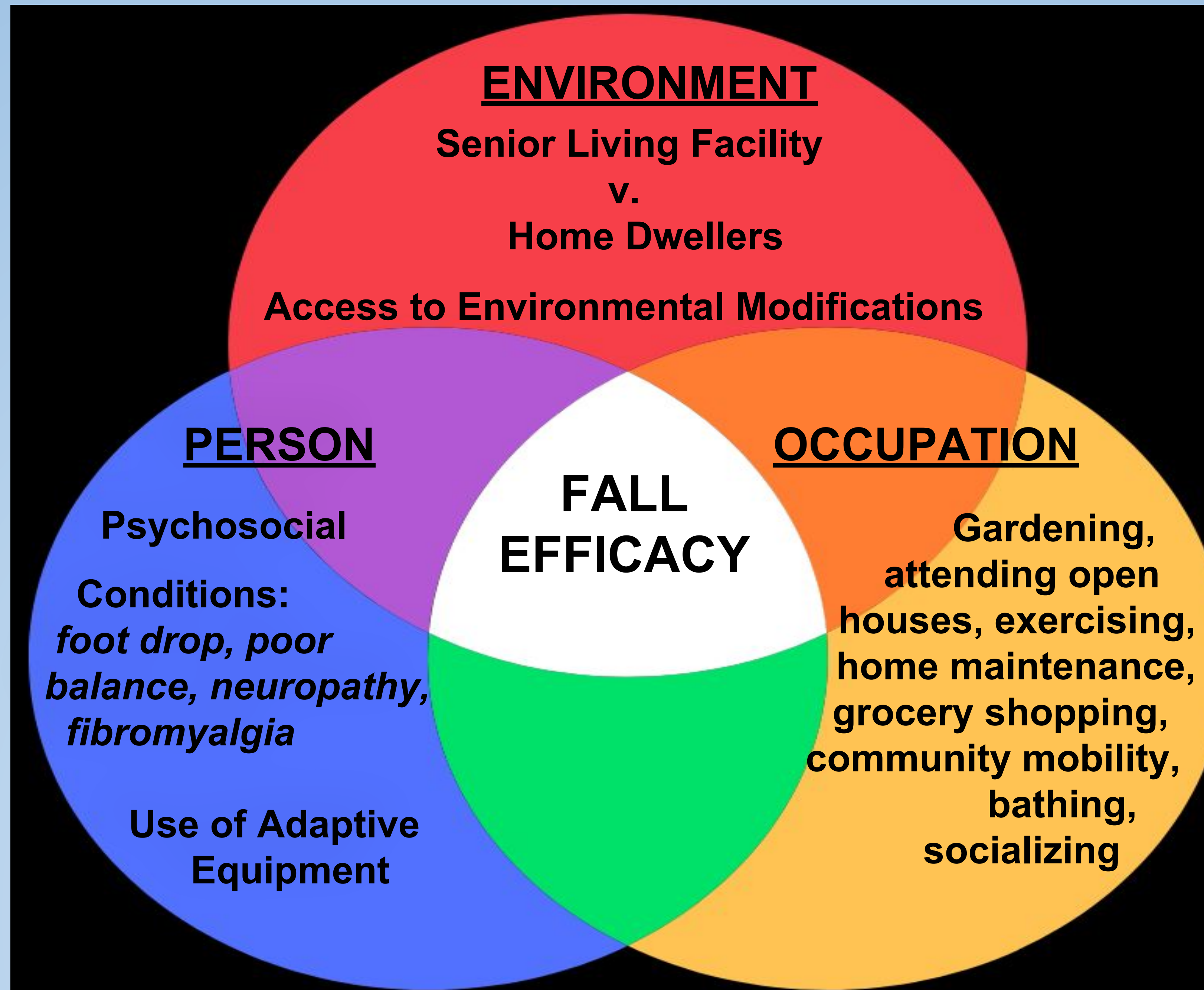
### Statement of Purpose:

To explore how low FE impacts participation in activities among community-dwelling OAs.

## RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS

- Semi-structured interviews guided by the Modified Fall Efficacy Scale (MFES) with 5 participants.
- Interviews were coded and themes were identified using triangulation and constant comparison method.
- Inclusion criteria:
  - ≤ 6 on MFES, 65 years of age or older, and cognitively intact.

MFES	Areas of the Lowest Average Scores
Take a bath or shower	3.7
Get in/out of a chair	3.7
Reach into cabinets or closets	3.7
Using front or rear steps at home	2.7



## RESULTS

### Themes

- The fit between the environment and occupation was the most prominent theme related to occupational performance (environmental modifications to meet challenge of occupation).
- Some participants reported adapting occupations to compensate for low FE, while others simply withdrew from occupations.
- Occupational challenges identified on the MFES were associated with a small base of support and weight shifting within the environment.

### Example of a poor "FIT" between P E O

Participant 1: MFES score 4.57

- P: Foot drop and a decline in memory
- E: Lack of environmental modifications in home and uneven surfaces in the community e.g. lack of grab bars, sidewalks
- O: Reduced confidence and participation in community mobility and when completing activities in the home

## PARTICIPANT QUOTES

"I try to walk on...ground level...I try never to walk where it is too steep...or where there are no rails...so like climbing or going down steep (stairs), you know I try to avoid..."

"What would you say frustrates you the most about being fearful about falling overall?" "It inhibits me socially and geographically..."

"Yeah, sometimes when trying to reach something, um, high up, I try to say, 'Should I bother? I might fall.'"

## DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

- Psychological factors, such as FE contribute to decreased participation in occupations and therefore, should be addressed as a component in fall prevention interventions to increase participation.
- Environmental modifications, or the lack thereof, had the most impact on occupational performance.
- A higher level of occupational participation was present among those who used adaptive and compensatory strategies.

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