

Facts about falls



1

About one-third of people over 65 will fall in a year, rising to approximately half of all those aged 80 and over.¹

2

Seventy-five per cent of falls are not reported.²

3

Falls destroy confidence, increase isolation and reduce independence, with 9 per cent of older people who fall becoming afraid to leave their homes in case they fall again.³

4

Falls represent over half of hospital admissions for accidental injury.⁴

5

Every year in England, more than 223,000 people over 60 have a fracture as a result of a fall. This is more than the entire population of Northampton.⁵

6

Each year, fractures in patients aged 60 years and over account for more than 1.5 million hospital bed days in the UK.⁶

7

Ten per cent of hip-fracture patients will die within one month of their fracture, 30 per cent will die within a year and there are 13,800 hip-fracture-related deaths a year in the UK.⁷

8

The annual cost of falls of people over 60 in England is £2 billion a year, or more than £5.6 million a day.⁸

9

A tailored exercise programme can reduce an individual's risk of falling by up to 50 per cent.⁹

10

It has been estimated that as much as 30 per cent of visual impairment in people over 75 is the result of wearing the wrong glasses or no glasses at all¹⁰, which can affect a person's balance and co-ordination.

1 C. Todd and D. Skelton (2004) *What Are the Main Risk Factors for Falls amongst Older People and What Are the Most Effective Interventions to Prevent These Falls?* Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe (Health Evidence Network report. Available at: www.euro.who.int/document/E82552.pdf)

2 *ibid*

3 *Spotlight Report 2008* (2008) Help the Aged

4 C. Lowdell et al. (eds) (2002) *Too High a Price, injuries and accidents in London*, London Health Observatory. Available at: www.lho.org.uk/viewResource.aspx?id=7956

5 Age UK and Department of Health calculation combined health and social care based on 2010 Department of Health and Personal Social Services Research Unit figures (unpublished) and 2011 census

6 Calculated using Northern Ireland 2007/08 Hospital Inpatient Information (2010), data collected on discharges from non-psychiatric hospitals in Scotland (SMR1/01, 2010), Health Solutions Wales, PEDW Statistics (2010) and National Osteoporosis Society, *Your Bones and Osteoporosis: What every man, woman and child should know* (2008). Available from: www.nos.org.uk/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=425 [accessed 27 July 2010]

7 J. Roche et al. (2009) 'Effect of Comorbidities and Postoperative Complications on Mortality after Hip Fracture in Elderly People: Prospective observational cohort study', *British Medical Journal*, 331 (7529): 1374

8 Age UK and Department of Health calculation combined health and social care based on 2010 Department of Health and Personal Social Services Research Unit figures (unpublished)

9 D. A. Skelton et al. (2004) 'FaME (Falls Management Exercise): RCT on the effects of a nine-month group exercise programme in frequently falling community dwelling women aged 65 and over', *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, 12(3): 457-458

10 *The Importance of Vision in Preventing Falls* (2003) British Geriatrics Society and College of Optometrists. Available at: www.bgs.org.uk/pdf/cms/reference/vision-in-falls.pdf