

# 36<sup>th</sup> Global Nursing Care & Education Conference

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#### **Educating and engaging elders in the Sure Steps® fall prevention program**

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this pilot study was to determine the effects of the Sure Steps® falls prevention program on the incidence of falls for adults aged 65 years and older living in their homes.

**Rationale and Significance:** In the United States, each year one in three adults aged 65 years and older has a fall resulting in a higher risk for mortality. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that at least 25,000 older adults in the US die as a result of falls. Falls affect the quality of life for elders, increase healthcare system expenditures, and place a burden on nursing care.

**Description of Methodology:** Phase 1: Nurses reviewed with the participants' a medication log, a symptom log, and the fall prevention Sure Steps® guidebook. Physical therapists obtained a Falls Efficacy Scale (FES) score, providing individualized education related to balance and exercise routines. Phase 2: Follow-up telephone surveys were conducted on a monthly basis for one year, consisting of four questions while reviewing the falls efficacy scale assessment.

**Subjects:** Ten adults aged 65 years and older living in the community receiving services from the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) were enrolled in the Sure Steps® falls efficacy scale. A convenience sample was utilized from the participants who met inclusion criteria.

**Findings:** No falls were reported by participants who received monthly telephone follow-up surveys over the one year timeframe. All participants' adhering to the exercise routine that made the recommended home modifications either had an improved FES score or remained the same.

**Conclusions:** The Sure Steps® program decreased the fall risk for the sample group while increasing their overall confidence with their ability to prevent a fall. Based on the implications of this pilot study, staff received training on the Sure Steps® fall prevention program at four additional office sites of the VNA. Educating, and engaging, elders in the Sure Steps® fall prevention program has the ability to prevent falls and enable elders to lead more productive lives should future studies correlate with finding adoption by all agencies is possible.

**Recommendations for Future Study:** Further study with a larger sample size and comparison group is warranted to determine the larger scale effects of the program. This could identify causal relationships and whether patient education; the combination of the individualized strength and balance exercise routine; coupled with the medication and symptom log reduced the incidence of falls. The Sure Steps® fall prevention program could be used by other visiting nurses and homecare agencies across the state and the United States to provide more detailed definitive data on program outcomes.

#### **Biography**

Karin Ciance has more than 34 years of experience in nursing including medical-surgical, rehabilitation, urgent care, women's health, and management. She received her Diploma in Nursing from Worcester City Hospital School of Nursing, a Bachelors of Science in Nursing from Worcester State College, a Master's of Science in Community Health Nursing from Worcester State College, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Walden University. Dr Ciance has served as Adjunct Faculty and Faculty Mentor for several local colleges and universities including Worcester State University, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and Atlantic Union College. She is the Executive Director for Greenwood Street Medical Clinic in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her current areas of interest are fall prevention and simulation in nursing practice.

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