

## **National Institute on Aging (NIA)/National Institutes of Health (NIH): Integrating Effective Strategies to Prevent Falls into Community Settings**

*Two recent studies funded by the National Institute on Aging and the Administration on Aging on integrating fall risk evaluation and prevention strategies into community programs show promise for future development of public health and medical practice education, reducing barriers or obstacles to pursue fall risk evaluation, and application into practice settings.*

### **Lead Agency:**

National Institute on Aging (NIA)

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

### **Agency Mission:**

- Support and conduct genetic, biological, clinical, behavioral, social, and economic research related to the aging process, diseases and conditions associated with aging, and other special problems and needs of older Americans.
- Foster the development of research and clinician scientists in aging.
- Communicate information about aging and advances in research on aging to the scientific community, health care providers, and the public.

### **Principal Investigators:**

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### **Partner Agency:**

U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA)

### **General Description:**

NIH-supported researchers tested the ability to integrate **effective strategies to prevent falls** in older persons into community care settings. The studies found that practitioners could adopt these strategies, although organizational and financial barriers limited the ability to implement them fully.

***Excellence:*** What makes this project exceptional?

Translation to practice.

***Significance:*** How is this research relevant to older persons, populations and/or an aging society?

Among older adults, falls are the number one cause of fractures, hospital admissions for trauma, loss of independence and injury-related deaths. Only half of older adults hospitalized for a broken hip return home or live on their own after the injury, which is why prevention of falls is so important. Previous clinical trials showed that fall risk evaluation and management programs can lessen risk of falls in older persons, but application of these findings to the “real world” of health care practice faces significant challenges in integrating and organizing activities of health care providers from a variety of specialties and care settings.

***Effectiveness:*** What is the impact and/or application of this research to older persons?

The results of these studies show that the fall risk evaluation and management strategies can be integrated into existing programs, although significant obstacles to full integration remain.

***Innovativeness:*** Why is this exciting or newsworthy?

This research is an excellent example of evidenced-based outcomes translated to the community. This project is also an example of prevention research to address an important health risk for seniors and demonstrates an effective collaboration among federal agencies.