Racial and Ethnic Difference in Falls Among Older Adults: Results from the California Health Interview Survey

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

• To look at the fall risk [risk of falling] in older adults from different racial/ethnic backgrounds (White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian).
• To examine the fall risk among Asian Americans and Hispanics based on English language proficiency (the ability to use the English language through speech or writing to make and communicate meaning) and race/ethnicity.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

• The number of older adults in the United States is growing very fast. Many of these older adults are members of diverse racial and ethnic minority groups.
• Falls are common among older adults and are a leading cause of injury related to decline in function and disability.
• Research shows that fall risk among older adults varies by racial/ethnic groups. Fall risk in older Hispanics and Asian American immigrants is not well known.

WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS?

• Race and ethnicity were significant predictors for the risk of falling among older adults:
  o In the past year, African Americans were most likely to experience > two falls (14.2%), followed by Hispanics (13.8%), non-Hispanic whites (12.8%), and Asian Americans (7.6%).
  o Asian Americans were 37% less likely to fall compared to non-Hispanic whites.
  o No significant differences in risk of falling were seen among African Americans or Hispanics when compared to non-Hispanic whites.
• Older adults who have two or more chronic, or long-term, ongoing, diseases had 1.59 times the odds of falling than those with less than two chronic diseases.
• Individuals who were not married had 1.23 times the odds of falling than those who are married.
• Asian Americans with limited English proficiency were 44% less likely to fall ≥ 2 times in the past year compared to non-Hispanic whites. No significant differences were seen among Hispanics, regardless of English proficiency.
WHO SHOULD CARE MOST?

- Researchers and policymakers interested in creating programs to promote awareness about fall risk and educating older adults in different racial/ethnic communities (White, Black, Hispanic, & Asian).
- Healthcare facilities, community organizations, health care providers and policy workers working with different racial/ethnic communities in the United States and the New York metropolitan area.
- Health advocates working in minority racial/ethnic communities.

HOW DOES THIS PUBLICATION ADVANCE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH?

- This study adds important insight to current literature regarding fall risks among different racial / ethnic groups.
- Having a better understanding of fall risk may help providers and researchers identify those who are most at risk for falls.

CITATION


LINKS

- CSAAH Community Briefs: https://med.nyu.edu/asian-health/resources/community-briefs