



CSAAH Publication Community Brief

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:
 - In the past year, African Americans were most likely to experience \geq two falls (**14.2%**), followed by Hispanics (**13.8%**), non-Hispanic whites (**12.8%**), and Asian Americans (**7.6%**).
 - Asian Americans were **37% less likely** to fall compared to non-Hispanic whites.
 - 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 \geq 2 times in the past year compared to non-Hispanic whites. No significant differences were seen among Hispanics, regardless of English proficiency.



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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

- Kwon, S.C., Han, B.H., Kranick, J.A., Wyatt, L.C., Blaum, C.S., Yi, S.S. and Trinh-Shevrin, C. 2017. Racial and Ethnic Difference in Falls Among Older Adults: Results from the California Health Interview Survey. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 5(2), pp.271-278. PMC5641225.

LINKS

- PubMed Link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28411329>
- CSAAH Community Briefs: <https://med.nyu.edu/asian-health/resources/community-briefs>