

STEPPING ON – COMMUNITY PROGRAM TO MAXIMISE INDEPENDENCE AND REDUCE THE RISKS OF OLDER PEOPLE FALLING

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Background/Purpose:

The population of people with HIV has aged substantially. In 1985 the population aged over 55 years with HIV was 2.7%. By 2020 it is expected to be 44.3%, including 13.2% aged between 65 and 74 years.

Data suggests that one in three people aged 65 years and over fall each year. The fall rate of people aged 45 to 65 years in America with HIV infection is as common as the fall rate of uninfected persons aged 65 years or older.

Approach:

To address this emerging concern, a multidisciplinary collaboration of HIV specific services and health promotion falls prevention for older people service providers from South Eastern Sydney and Sydney Local Health District was established. The evidence-based Stepping On falls prevention program was implemented targeting older people with HIV.

Outcomes/Impact:

Participants' who attended five or more of the seven weekly sessions recorded improvement in leg strength and/or balance; the single most effective intervention to reduce falls. These outcomes are consistent with a review of the quantitative data for South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Stepping On groups over a five-year period.

The innovative HIV falls prevention collaboration is proving to be successful for participant recruitment, program implementation and falls prevention outcome measures.

Innovation and Significance:

Preliminary research indicates that people with HIV are experiencing aged related co-morbidities many years earlier than the general population. Many of these co-morbidities can lead to an increased falls risk providing the rationale for an aged related falls prevention program; promoting independence for people with HIV from a younger age. A falls prevention collaboration of service providers will enable such an intervention.

Disclosure of Interest Statement (example):

No interests to disclose.