Lecture Topic: Trauma & Falls in the Elderly Patient

1. Mr. W, 78 year old man, has a slip and fall while walking with his wife. He lands on his backside. He presents to the ER with moderate to severe low back pain. X-rays were taken.

X-rays show an L3 compression fracture with greater than 50% loss of height. After implementing appropriate pain management, the next step is:

a. Bone scan of spine
b. Nasal calcitonin
c. Walker
d. CT of lumbar spine
e. Physical therapy consult

Answer: D
2. A 79-year-old woman presents to the Emergency Department after a ground-level fall on her left side. On Emergency Department presentation, she complains of left knee and hip pain, but can ambulate with moderate to significant assistance. Her left leg is neither shortened, nor externally rotated. Plain films are obtained:

X-rays are negative, per Radiology. A walker is obtained for the patient and she is discharged to home with instructions to follow-up with her primary care practitioner, if the pain does not improve over the next 5 to 7 days. She presents to her primary care physician 3 days later with worsening pain, now with the inability to weight-bear. She is sent back to the Emergency Department. Repeat plain radiographs are unchanged, per Radiology. What is required at this point?

- Refer to Physical Therapy
- Increased pain medications
- MRI scan of the hip
- Orthopedics consult
- X-ray of the knee joint

**Answer:** C

3. Mrs. M. is a 78 year old woman who was standing on a step ladder to change a light bulb. She suddenly lost her balance and fell forward, landing directly on her face. On physical exam, she reports facial pain, headache, neck pain and is found is have a quadriplegia with significantly greater upper extremity weakness and sensory loss than in the lower extremities. After immediate immobilization of the patient’s cervical spine, the next step is:

- CT of head
- CT of facial bones
c) Transfer to trauma center
d) MRI of C-spine
e) CT of C-spine
Answer: E