**FALLS**

Key Teaching Points For EM Faculty

Addresses Trauma Including Fall Competencies

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**FALLS**

An event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or other lower levels (WHO)

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**Factors that affect the outcome of falls:**

- Severity of impact
- Co-morbidities (e.g., OP, OA, pain)
- Environmental hazards
- Poor social supports

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**Injuries & Complications**

- Soft tissue injuries / fractures
- ICH, C-spine injury
- Hypothermia
- Rhabdomyolysis with AKI
- Fear of falling
- Unsteady gait, lack of ambulation, deconditioning
- Depression
- Poor quality of life
- Increased morbidity and mortality

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**References**


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**Fall**

All falls must be evaluated in the elderly

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**History:**

- Circumstance of fall - when, how, how many falls in past 12 months, previous falls
- Setting of the events (place, activity & timing)
- Association with other symptoms or injury
- Association with activities and behaviors
- Risk factors that may contribute to falling
- Factors that may contribute to injury

**Physical Examination:**

- Alertness, orientation and cognition
- CV Exam, orthostatic BP, heart rate & rhythm
- Neuro Exam (motor, coordination, gait, balance, sensory, vision, etc.)
- Musculoskeletal Exam (joints, muscle strength)
- "Timed Get Up and Go Test": Ask the patients to stand up from a chair, walk a distance of 10ft, and turn around, walk back to the chair and sit. (<10 sec freely mobile, <20sec mostly independent, >20 sec impaired mobility)

**Tests:** If indicated, tests may be ordered.

- BMP, CBC, B12, TSH, B/C, UA/UC, EEG, ECG/telemetry, etc
- Imaging tests if suspect fracture, intracranial injury, or internal organ injury

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**Assessment:**

- R/O Injury:
  - Soft tissue injuries / fractures
  - ICH, C-spine injury
  - Hypothermia
  - Rhabdomyolysis with AKI

**Review risk factors and causes:**

- Intrinsic and extrinsic

**Identify factors that affect the outcome of falls:**

- Co-morbidities: osteoporosis, arthritis, pain, etc.
- Hazardous environment
- Social support

**Risk stratify based on complications:**

- Risk of complication because of falls

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**Plan:**

- Care for injury
- Prevention of complications
- Treatment of cause/risks
- Risk modification
- Counseling

- No indication for hospitalization; call PCP & have pt schedule office f/u w/in 1 wk
- Indication for hospitalization
  - DC w/ counseling & Rx; office f/u w/ PCP w/in 1 wk, if needed
  - Admit