Series on Seniors

Seniors and Falls

Fall-Related Hospitalizations

Based on acute care hospitalization data from 2008–2009, we know the following:
- Falls were the leading cause of injury hospitalization for seniors across Canada, contributing to 73,190 total hospitalizations.
- Half of these falls (50%) occurred in the home.
- Thirty-five percent of fall-related hospitalizations involved a hip fracture.
- The average length of stay for seniors hospitalized for falls was 16 days, compared to 10 days for all hospitalizations among seniors.
- Two-thirds (67%) of fall-related alternate level of care days were spent waiting for a transfer into residential care.

Figure 1: Falls as a Proportion of All Injury Hospitalizations Among Seniors, 2008–2009

Sources
Discharge Abstract Database, Canadian Institute for Health Information; Fichier des hospitalisations MED-ÉCHO, ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Quebec.
Preventing Falls in Home and Residential Care

Figure 2: Seniors at Risk for Falls in Home and Residential Care

- Falls lead to falls; the most powerful predictor of a fall is a history of falling.
- CIHI collects information on falls in home and residential care using interRAI assessments (www.interrai.org). These assessments provide real-time decision support for care planning with Clinical Assessment Protocols (CAPs) that flag those at risk.
- Using this assessment, we know that seniors in home care are more likely to be identified by the CAP as being at risk for falls than those in residential care (29% and 14%, respectively).

Falls and Socio-Economic Status

- Seniors in the least affluent neighbourhoods in Canada had a fall-related hospitalization rate that was 1.2 times higher than in the most affluent areas, based on 2008–2009 data. Because of the high rate of fall hospitalizations in this age group, actions targeted to prevent hospitalizations for falls and reduce disparities in this age group would have the greatest potential benefit.

Want more information?
Email: seniors@cihi.ca
Website: www.cihi.ca