

Falling Into Home Mods: Occupational Therapy's Role in Keeping Older Adults Safe at Home

Authors:

Elizabeth Janeczko, Brendan Kiernan, M. Susan Paige,
Stephanie Reitemeier, Josh Springer

Faculty Mentor:

Catherine Piersol, PhD, OTR/L

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Objectives of Presentation:

1. Describe the most recent evidence pertaining to the efficacy of occupational therapy-based home modifications in reducing falls in community-dwelling older adults
2. Differentiate occupational therapy's role in home modifications from other health professions
3. Recognize home modification strategies that can be used in clinical practice

Clinical Question:

Does occupational therapy guided home modifications reduce the risk for falls and/or increase fall efficacy in the daily activities of well elders living at home?

Methods:

Keywords

- *Population*
 - Older adults, senior citizens, well elder
 - Home-dwelling, community-dwelling
- *Intervention*
 - Home assessment/modification, accessible
 - Occupational therapy
- *Outcome*
 - Falls, fall prevention, risk factors, fall efficacy, fear of falling
 - Fear, Activities of Daily Living, Instrumental Activities of Daily Living, safety

Databases searched

- CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsychINFO, Scopus, Cochrane, ERIC

Article Appraisal

- 10 articles included in final review
 - Each article critiqued separately by two individuals
 - Interpretation discrepancies discussed in person

Themes:

High Risk

- Home modifications are effective in the reduction of falls with individuals who are high risk
 - High risk factors include prior history of falls, functional decline, and comorbidities ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6}
 - History of falls was most prevalently mentioned as the high-risk population benefiting from home modifications

Adherence

- Individuals are more likely to adhere to recommendations if:
 - Intrinsic and extrinsic factors are considered for each modification ^{3, 6}
 - The home modifications are inexpensive ⁷

PEO-fit

- Interventions should be individualized, not one size fits all ¹
- Modifications should be conducted by a health professional who considers the dynamic interactions between the person and environment. ^{6, 1, 3}
- Interventions incorporating the person, environment, and occupation decrease rate of falls. ^{7, 5}

Inconsistencies

- Varied definitions of falls ^{5, 2}
- Lack of standardized measures and outcomes
 - Varied methods of recording falls ^{5, 2}
 - Difficulty isolating direct effect of home modification from multi-factorial approach ^{8, 1}

Future Research:

- Need for more studies in United States
- More research on fall efficacy needed-most research is based on risks, rate and number of falls
- Need for studies that differentiate between the role of an occupational therapist and other health professionals in home modifications

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Contacts:

Elizabeth Janeczko: Elizabeth.Janeczko@jefferson.edu
Brendan Kiernan: Brendan.Kiernan@jefferson.edu
M. Susan Paige: Mary.Paige@jefferson.edu
Stephanie Reitemeier: Screitemeier@gmail.com
Joshua Springer: Joshua.Springer@jefferson.edu