# An Interprofessional Falls Assessment Clinic Model to Develop Collaborative Team Skills among Health Professional Students

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## BACKGROUND

- Older adults are at increased risk for falls and fall related injuries, leading to loss of independence, disability, and increased mortality.
- Preventing injury and falls is a national Healthy People 2010 objective. However, physicians and other health professionals frequently fail to incorporate known evidence into usual care. Screening for falls is not consistently performed as an essential assessment in older adults by primary care providers.
- Multidisciplinary assessment can be an important component in preventing falls in community dwelling adults.
- In new practice models, such as the Chronic Care Model, there is an emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration, however health professions students have little or no opportunity to practice together during their educational training.
- Students need innovative and comprehensive learning experiences in which they work collaboratively with other disciplines to solve healthcare problems in a growing geriatric population.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Develop and implement the Falls Prevention Assessment Clinic; a clinical educational site where multiple disciplines will be able to train and work together as an interprofessional team.

Medical and Health Profession students will be able to:
- Identify roles and responsibilities of professionals on a health care team.
- Practice communication and collaboration skills in an interprofessional team.
- Provide an educational venue to increase the knowledge of geriatric fellows, family medicine residents, and students in medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, pharmacy, social work, and nursing regarding prevention and management of falls in the elderly.
- Clinical Goals:
  - Administer evidence-based assessment tools to older adults at risk of falls and/or have a fear of falling.
  - Develop a plan of care to prevent falls and decrease fear of fear of falling


Timed Up and Go Test
www.drdenizdogan.com
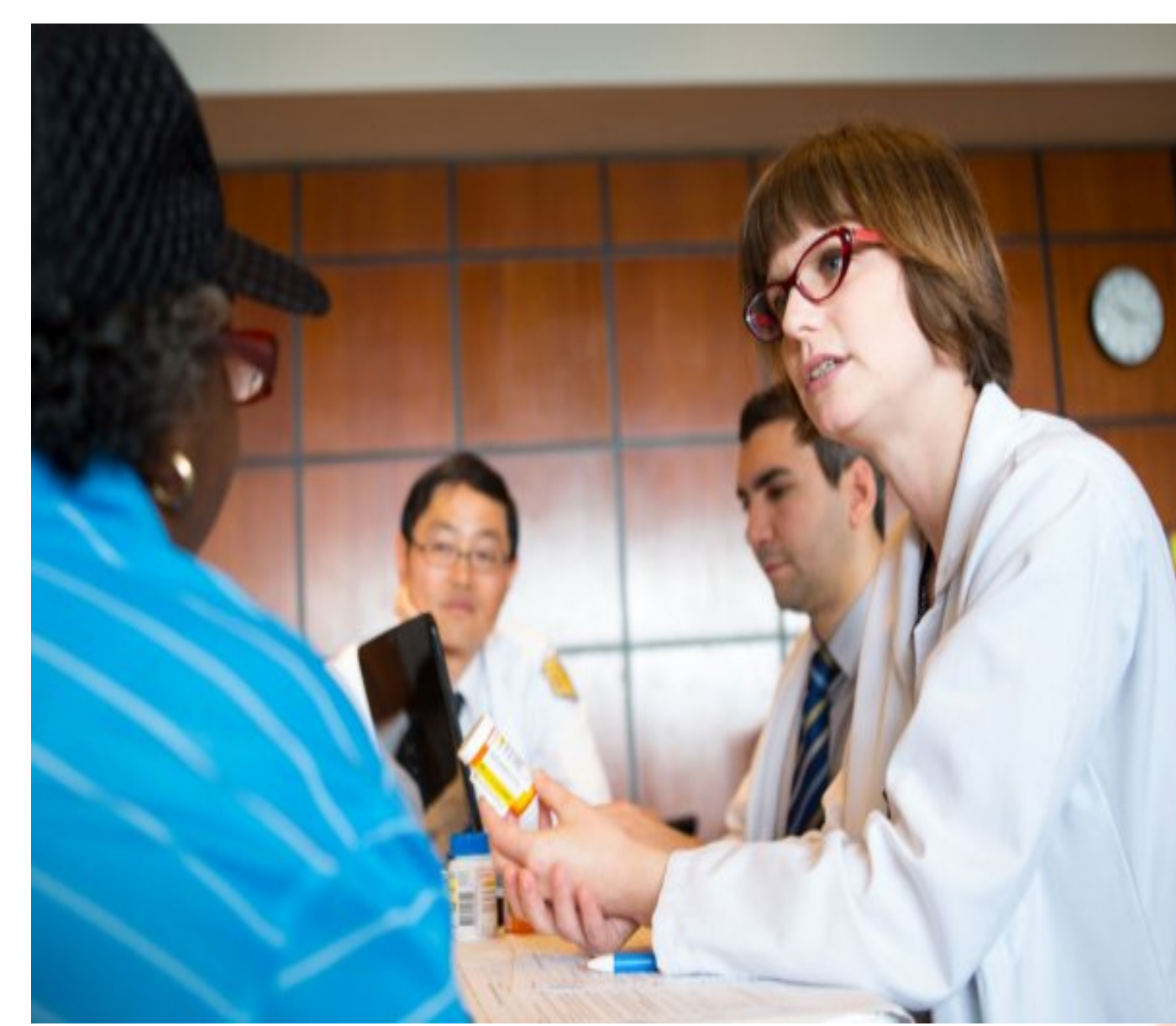

Medication Assessment
www.ucsf.edu

## METHODS

- The interprofessional team (students and faculty preceptors) meet once a month at a primary care office located in an urban community senior center.
- Faculty preceptors are comprised of nurse, social worker, physician, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and pharmacist.
- Students complete a pre- and post-survey on attitudes towards health care teams, a knowledge survey on falls and the elderly, and a satisfaction survey on the educational experience.
- Students and their preceptor have 15-20 minutes to assess each patient. Students may also have the opportunity to observe screening procedures administered by other disciplines during falls clinic.
- An interprofessional team meeting is conducted following assessment. Team members present their findings and collaborate on a feasible plan of care for the patient. All disciplines contribute to the *Falls Prevention Program Evaluation Summary*.
- Follow-up evaluations are completed two weeks after the initial visit in the physicians office or over the telephone. Post-clinic phone assessments are conducted 6 weeks and 3 months.
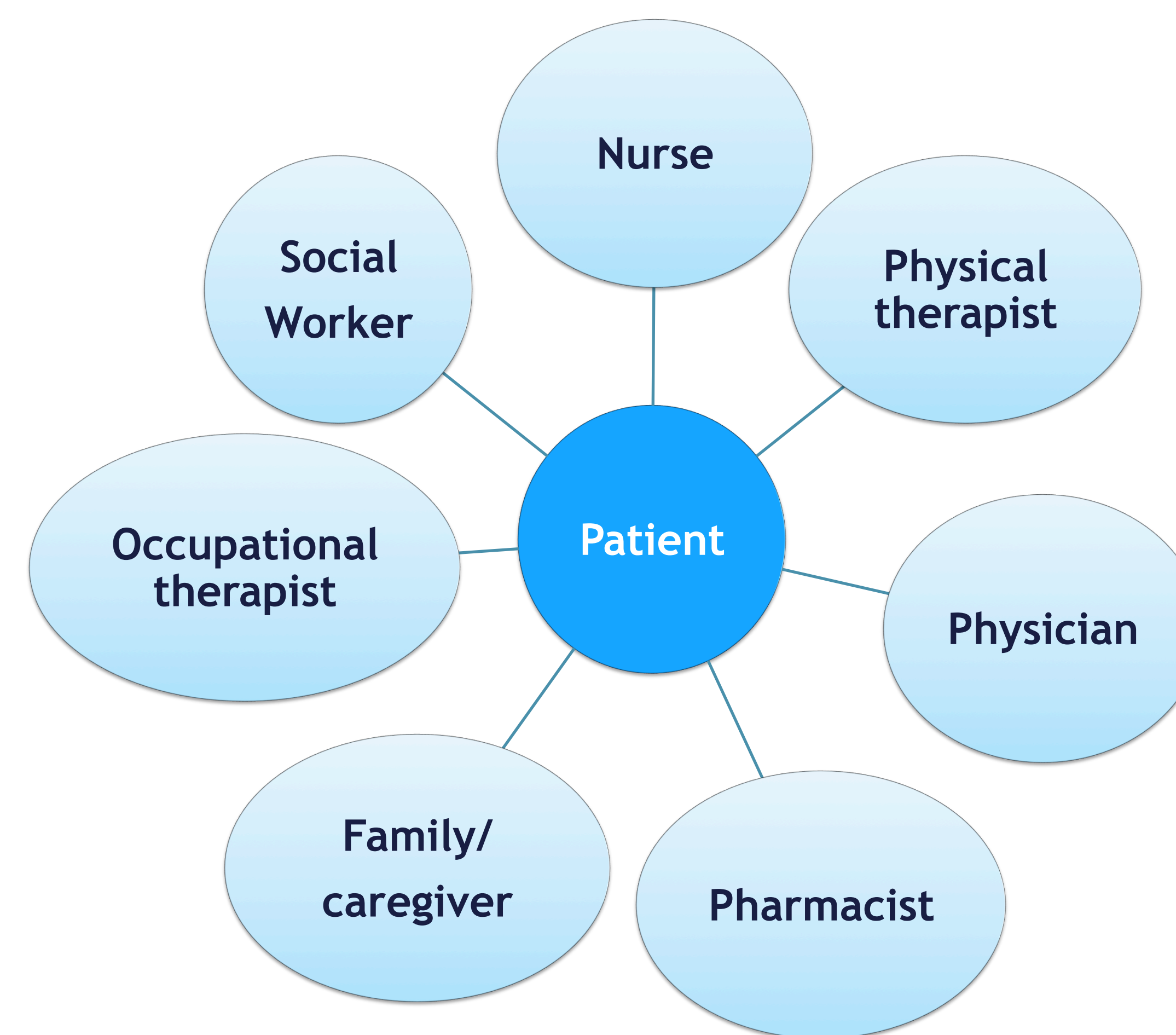


## FALLS SCREENING TOOLS

- Med. History and Physical Exam
- UE and LE Strength Test
- Medication Assessment
- Allen Cognitive Level Screen
- Mini-Cog Assessment
- PHQ2 Depression Screen
- Falls efficacy Scale (I)
- Katz Basic ADLs
- Lawton-Brody IADLs
- Social Support Needs checklist

- Timed Up and Go Test
- Modified Clinical Test of Sensory Integration & Balance
- Functional Reach
- Four Square Step Test
- Observation of Gait & Deviations
- Use of appropriate footwear
- Use/condition of assistive device
- Vision screen

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Early findings from a small sample (18 interprofessional students) demonstrate a trend towards an *increased positive attitude* towards health care teams. Students maintain a *neutral attitude* towards falls and the elderly.

**Student Satisfaction with the Falls Prevention Assessment Clinic (*n*=18)**

|  | n (%) Satisfied/Very Satisfied |
| --- | --- |
| Team Interaction | 17 (94) |
| Interprofessional Education | 18 (100) |
| Team Participation | 17 (94) |
| Team Meeting | 18 (100) |
| Assessment Materials | 18 (100) |
| Assessment Time | 14 (78) |
| Clinical Space | 17 (94) |
| Clarity of learning experience | 18 (100) |

**5 Point Likert Scale Averages:** 1-Very Dissatisfied, 2-Dissatisfied, 3-Neutral, 4-Satisfied, 5-Very Satisfied

A trend towards being *Satisfied to Very Satisfied with the clinic experience*

## DISCUSSION

Students reported (via open-ended survey questions) enjoying the opportunity to observe other disciplines and engage in the team meeting experience. This clinical activity helped them gain knowledge of other health professionals' roles and practice communication and interprofessional teamwork.

The multidisciplinary approach helped the students to better understand resources available in caring for older adults who fall or have a fear of falling.

Challenges:
- Length of Assessments and Screens
- Patient fatigue (unable to participate in team meeting)
- Scheduling faculty/students/patients
- Recruitment of Students

Opportunities:
- Problem solve as an interprofessional team
- Collaboratively Indentify strategies to enhance Patient-centered Care
- Brainstorm & share ideas to improve scheduling conflicts

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS