

# Falls injuries and Prevention:

## General Facts and Figures; Sources and Resources; Common Strategies



## General Facts and Figures:

- Falls are the most common cause of injury in older people (>65 years) and children (0-14 years).
- Around 30 – 60% people aged over 65 years fall each year and 10-20% of those falls result in injury, hospitalisation or death.
- By 2035 the number of people over 65 in New Zealand is expected to double to 1.2 million
- The lifetime costs to ACC of older people falls in 2013 was \$351 million
- Falls account for 40% of ACC claims for those aged 65-69 years and 60% of all claims for the over 85 years old
- Falls related injury are the number one cause of child hospitalisations for the 0-14 years
- ACC claim costs from child falls are on average around \$45 million per year

## Sources and Resources:

<b>Falls injury statistics</b>	<i>Serious Injury Outcome indicators 2000-2013 (Stats NZ select tables 10 -18):</i> <a href="http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/injuries/serious-injury-outcome-indicators-2000-13.aspx">http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/injuries/serious-injury-outcome-indicators-2000-13.aspx</a> <i>IPRU injury query system (specify fall injury parameters):</i> <a href="http://ipru3.otago.ac.nz/niqs/">http://ipru3.otago.ac.nz/niqs/</a> <i>Latest injury claim statistics:</i> <a href="http://www.acc.co.nz/about-acc/statistics/injury-statistics/index.htm">http://www.acc.co.nz/about-acc/statistics/injury-statistics/index.htm</a> <i>Injury claim comparison reports by district:</i> <a href="http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/communities/injury-comparison-reports/index.htm">http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/communities/injury-comparison-reports/index.htm</a>
<b>Falls Prevention</b>	<i>Health Quality and Safety Commission:</i> <a href="http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/reducing-harm-from-falls/">http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/reducing-harm-from-falls/</a> <i>ACC:</i> <a href="http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/falls/index.htm">http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/falls/index.htm</a> <i>Falls Prevention webinar:</i> <a href="http://www.safecommunities.org.nz/resources/recorded-webinars">http://www.safecommunities.org.nz/resources/recorded-webinars</a>

## Common Strategies:

Whilst common prevention strategies in the home may help prevent injury such as reducing tripping hazards, introducing slip resistant surfaces etc. the following help reduce the risk of falls in older people and children under the age of 14 years.

<p><b>Older People falls prevention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home based strength and balance retraining (Otago exercise Programme) (Gillespie, Robertson)</li> <li>• Community based group exercise for people with impaired physical function (Barnett)</li> <li>• Tai Chi group exercise (Gillespie)</li> <li>• Home safety assessment &amp; modification programme delivered by an experienced occupational therapist, targeted at those with a previous fall (Gillespie) or people with severe visual impairment (Campbell)</li> <li>• Withdrawal of psychotropic medication (Gillespie)</li> <li>• Cardiac pacing in those with carotid sinus syndrome (Gillespie)</li> <li>• Expedited cataract removal (Kannus)</li> <li>• Multifactorial programmes individually targeting the community living older person and the home environment (Gillespie)</li> <li>• Community based multifaceted programme to encourage behavioural change (Clemson)</li> <li>• Multifactorial fall prevention programmes in long term care facilities, and in hospital wards (Kannus)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child falls prevention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interventions mostly rely on modifying domestic or play environments e.g. playground surfaces and within the home installing stair gates and upper level window catches.</li> <li>• Clear safety messages around use of playgrounds and parks. Trampolines, at home and at play: <a href="http://www.safekids.nz/Safety-Topics/Details/Type/View/ID/7/Falls">http://www.safekids.nz/Safety-Topics/Details/Type/View/ID/7/Falls</a></li> <li>• Preventing child falls as they grow: <a href="http://www.plunket.org.nz/your-child/safety/home-safety/preventing-falls/">http://www.plunket.org.nz/your-child/safety/home-safety/preventing-falls/</a></li> </ul>

More information is available from  
'Safe Communities Foundation NZ':

128 Hurstmere Road,  
Takapuna, Auckland, New Zealand

Email: [contact@scfnz.org](mailto:contact@scfnz.org)

Website: [safecommunities.org.nz](http://safecommunities.org.nz)



**PAN PACIFIC**  
Safe Communities Network

**Fact  
Sheet  
Series**

Fact  
Sheet **8**  
Feb 2016