FALLS AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE IN BASRAH

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Abstract

Objective
To estimate the incidence of falls among elderly and to study its determinants.

Methodology
This is a cross-sectional, household survey carried out in two areas in Basrah Governorate (namely Hay-Al-Khalig “A1” and Shatt-Al Arab “A2”) for the period 1998-2000, involving elderly people (60 years and above). The study involved 240 elderly from A1 and 211 from A2, special questionnaire used and filled by one of the investigators.

Results
The overall incidence of falls was 223.9/1000/year, with a higher incidence in A2 (270/1000/year) than A1 (183/1000/year). The incidence in females was nearly twice that of males (M: F ratio 1:1.9), and was increasing with age. About one-third (34.0%) of falls needed medical intervention and (14.0%) required hospital admission. Nearly (13%) of falls associated with fractures at different sites, which was increasing with age. A significant inverse relationship was found between functional ability and the incidence of falls. Visual problem contributed to 30.7% of falls. Abnormal gait and balance were significantly predisposed to falls. The prevalence of fear of falls was higher among females than males and was increasing with age.

Conclusion
The results of this study indicate that, the incidence of falls among elderly in Basrah was relatively high, particularly among elderly females (286.9 /1000/year), therefore, prevention of falls in elderly should be urgently adopted to control the increasing burden of the age-related fractures or other injuries.

Key word: Falls, elderly, incidence, fear.