

## **CAN THE INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF FUNCTIONING, DISABILITY AND HEALTH (ICF) BE USED AS A FRAMEWORK TO EXPLAIN FALLS IN OLDER AUSTRALIAN WOMEN?**

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### **Introduction**

Falls risk is complex and the application of a holistic framework such as the ICF can account for the impact on falls of activity and participation, the environment and personal factors, in addition to body systems and structures. However, there is little evidence about how to map the ICF reliably to falls risk, and if analysis of falls risk using the ICF components confirms the theoretical assumptions of the ICF.

### **Aim**

To map the factors associated with falls risk in the Australian Longitudinal study of Women's Health (ALSWH) cohort dataset and analyse them using the ICF.

### **Method**

First, items from five ALSWH surveys conducted from 1996-2005 were mapped to ALSWH survey categories and checked for accuracy across the surveys. Secondly, two occupational therapy researchers individually mapped these ALSWH survey items to the primary ICF components according to their interpretation of the meaning of the ICF components. Agreement between the raters was evaluated. The ten linking rules by Cieza et al and the 8 updated rules by Cieza et al were then used to link the ALSWH health status measures to the ICF. Results from both mapping exercises were compared and a consensus decision was made about the final linking of the items.

### **Results**

410 items were mapped across the surveys. The OT raters differed on the placement of only 7 items. Differences were related to interpretations of activity and participation. Mapping using the 10 rules method allocated items differently due to personal factors not being classified and activity and participation being classified together. SF36 items were defined according to the rules method, but differently to the OT raters.

### **Conclusion**

The mapping exercise was challenging to accommodate both the professional interpretations of the OT raters and the rules published for this purpose. A review of the combination of activity and participation ICF components, and further definitions of personal factors and environmental factors are needed.

### **Contribution to the evidence base of occupational therapy**

The ICF is a useful generic framework to identify occupation focused falls risk factors and to underpin occupational therapy practice in this area.