

The Relationship between an Individual's Fear of Falling and Home Usability: A Study of Older Adults Living in the Community in Ireland.

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Background: The areas of the home environment and falls are important areas in gerontological research. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between fear of falling and home usability in community dwelling older adults. Methodology: A cross-sectional correlation study design was used. The participants were recruited from an Active Retirement Association in the Galway area. Twenty-five participants over the age of sixty-five took part in this study. Demographic data were collected from the participants including information on age, gender, living situation and previous falls history. The Falls Efficacy Scale (FES) was used to evaluate fear of falling and the Usability in My Home (UIMH) instrument was used as a measure of home usability. Quantitative data were analysed using the statistical package SPSS and the qualitative components of the UIMH were analysed using content analysis. Results: The findings of this study revealed a significant inverse relationship between fear of falling home usability in older adults. Conclusions: The results of this study indicated that those individuals who scored highly on the fear of falling scale, as measured by the FES, had significantly lower scores on the home usability evaluation as measured by the UIMH.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy

Occupational therapists who work with older adults should consider the impact of subjective evaluations on an individuals fear of falling.