

## Clinical Applicability of HOMEFAST in Occupational Therapy Intervention

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### Introduction

Falls affect approximately 30% of people aged over 65 annually [1]. Falls prevention programmes aim to reduce rates of falls and often include screening the home for environmental hazards [1].

### Objectives

The present study examines the clinical utility of one screening tool - The Home Falls and Accidents Screening Tool (HOMEFAST) [2], used by Occupational Therapists (OT) within a Falls Service. We aimed to explore links to social factors, examine correlations with other standardised instruments and sensitivity to change.

### Methods

156 community dwelling older people (mean age=79.15 yrs, range 65-93)(Audit data: 2006-2008). Demographic data (age, gender, number/location of previous falls, socioeconomic status (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation(SIMD) were collected at baseline. SPSS v15 was used to assess sensitivity to change and correlations with other standardised instruments (Falls Efficacy Scale (FES), Tinetti Mobility Score, MMSE).

### Results

Limited evidence of a negative association between initial HOMEFAST score and age ( $r=0.274$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) and positive correlation with SIMD score ( $r=0.174$ ,  $p=0.03$ ). Weak, but significant correlations at baseline for HOMEFAST score and FES ( $r=0.025$ ,  $p=0.0165$ ), and Tinetti ( $r=-0.447$ ,  $p=0.03$ ). Evidence of sensitivity to change in time (mean difference = 2.076, 95% CI [1.69-2.46],  $p<0.001$ ); size of effect was positively correlated with duration of OT service input.

### Conclusion

This study provides limited evidence for the clinical utility of the HOMEFAST tool in an at risk population, in terms of sensitivity to change and association with other risk factors. Further research is recommended to further explore the potential utility of this screening tool in falls prevention programmes.

### Contribution to the evidence base of occupational therapy

Although limited by a lack of control group, the large sample size does suggest that OT can lead to a reduction in home hazards over time in older fallers.

### References:

[1] Skelton DA, Todd C. What are the main risk factors for falls amongst older people and what are the most effective interventions to prevent these falls? WHO Health Evidence Network for Policy Makers, Denmark, 2004.

[2] Mackenzie L, et al. Designing the Home Falls and Accidents Screening Tool (HOME FAST): Selecting the items. *Brit J Occ Ther.* 2000;63:260-269.