

Leisure-Time Physical Activity and Falls with and Without Injuries Among Older Adult Women



Falls and fall-related injuries are unfortunately quite common among older adult populations. Although older adults are recommended to engage in 150-300 minutes of weekly physical activity by the World Health Organization, potential associations between physical activity and increased fall risk have been speculated. To address these questions, a retrospective cohort analysis was performed. Within this Australian-based study, participants born between 1946 and 1951 who completed follow-up health questionnaires in 2016 and 2019 were included. In the 2016 survey, self-reported physical activity amounts and type of physical activity were reported. In the 2019 survey, non-injurious and injurious falls in the previous 12 months were reported. After obtaining this information, associations between leisure-time physical activity and falls were presented using odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals.

Ultimately, this study included 7,139 women with a mean age of 67.7 years old. The results found that participation in leisure-time physical activity at or above the level recommended by the World Health Organization was associated with reduced odds of non-injurious and injurious falls when compared to those who did not meet this level of physical activity. The odds ratios of non-injurious falls for those who engaged in 150 to <300 min/week of physical activity was 0.74 while the odds ratio of non-injurious falls for those engaged in ≥ 300 min/week was even lower at 0.66. When focusing on falls that resulted in injury, those who participated in 150 to <300 min/week of physical activity had an odds ratio of 0.70 while those who engaged in ≥ 300 min/week had a slightly greater risk with an odds ratio of 0.77.

Overall, these study results are quite promising and highlight the importance of regular physical activity in older adults. Falls that result in injury can be devastating, and those that do not result in injury can still cause patients to fear future falls. This may cause barriers to independent living and promote exercise avoidance. However, with studies highlighting the decreased risk of falls due to physical activity, older adults should feel confident in their decision to stay active.

Link to Article: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2814343?resultClick=24>

Link to Image: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/playing-an-instrument-singing-may-help-preserve-brain-health#What-does-music-do-for-people-with-dementia?>