Preventing Falls in Older Adults: Perspective of First Responders

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Engaging with First Responders to Prevent Falls in Older Adults

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Why is Novato Fire Protection District studying falls in older adults?
Aging in America

- The population of individuals over 65 years of age is expected to grow by 19% in 2030, increasing to 72.1 million

- Older adult population in Marin County and Novato

- Aging leads to a decline in physical and cognitive functioning and a decreased quality of life
Problem Statement

• Falls are a major health concern in older adults

• Fall incidents and associated costs are increasing as the older adult population increases

• There is a lack of training for first responders regarding geriatrics care and fall prevention
Consequences of Falls

• Injuries
  o Loss of functioning and independence
  o More hospitalizations
  o Early death

• Depression was found to be associated with higher rates of falls
Interventions to Decrease Falls

• Effectiveness of multifactorial interventions

• Occupational therapists focus on home modifications and assistive devices by looking at the fit between person, environment, and task

• First responders conduct screenings & assessments and provide education & referrals

• Collaboration of healthcare professionals and first responders to reduce falls
Definition

An event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or other lower level.
Purpose of Study

1. To identify fall risk factors in community-dwelling older adults.

2. To understand the experiences of older adults who have fallen.

3. To determine whether there is a relationship between falls and depression in older adults.

4. To examine first responder experiences with fall-related calls in older adults.

5. To identify approaches to prevent falls in older adults.
Study Participants

- Older adults
  - Age 60 and above
  - Have been treated by the Novato Fire Department (NFD) as a result of a fall

- NFD first responders
  - Firefighters
  - EMTs
Data Collection Approaches

✓ Will answer the research questions associated with the study purpose.

✓ Approved by the Dominican University Institutional Review Board.

✓ Combines different approaches: quantitative and qualitative.
Patient Care Reports (PCRs)
Focus Groups
Telephone Interviews
## Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2)

Over the past 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

<table>
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<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Several days</th>
<th>More than half the days</th>
<th>Nearly every day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Little interest or</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>pleasure in doing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>things</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Feeling down,</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>depressed, or</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>hopeless</td>
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Study Completion Timeline

March
- Code PCR narratives
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Train NFD on PHQ-2

April
- Complete coding of PCR narratives
- Complete Focus Groups & Interviews

May
- Analyze data from PCRs, Focus Groups & Interviews

June
- Analyze preliminary data from PHQ-2
- Draft Report

July
- Complete report
Questions?