

**International Epidemiological Association. European Regional Meeting:
“Perspectives on Epidemiology in Europe.” The Hague, The Netherlands, 1995.**

Prevalence and factors associated with falls and injurious falls among urban community-dwelling elderly

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Abstract

Purpose: Describe falls and injurious falls among urban community-dwelling people, older than sixty-five years, according to their circumstances, consequences and the characteristics of the study population. Analyze the associations between those characteristics and injurious falls.

Methods: The data come from the baseline of the longitudinal study 'Envejecer en Leganes' (Aging in Leganes), collected in an age-sex stratified sample, through interviews based on two structured questionnaires and a physical examination in 1993. The final sample size was 1181. Information was collected about whether the subjects had suffered any falls in the year before the interviews, the physical consequences (injuries, activity restriction, hospitalization), and the circumstances surrounding the fall (localization, need of help or being transported for assistance). Associations between the population characteristics and injurious falls had been analyzed by dividing the characteristics into direct factors (those who prompt the subject to fall) and indirect factors (those who modify the former factors), using the logistic regression method.

Results: Prevalence for falls was 14,4 %, and 6 % for injurious falls. Subjects who are more likely to suffer an injurious fall were between 75 and 84 years of age (OR=1,8), are women (OR=1,9), present impaired cognition (OR=1,9) as indirect factors and suffer from sleep disturbances (OR=2,0) as a direct factor.

Conclusions: Injurious falls are associated with diverse factors some of which can be modified as a prevention strategy.

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