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Diabetic Elderly: Correlation Between Falls and Risk Factors

Oliveira, R.C.S¹, Lima Neto, J.S², Torres, A.L.N.P.G³, Queiroz, S.S⁴, Souza, J.F.S⁵, Fittipaldi, E.O.S⁶

^{1,3,4,5}Discente do Curso de Fisioterapia da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco;

^{2,6}Docente/pesquisador do Departamento de Fisioterapia da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The fall event, when associated with Diabetes Mellitus in the elderly, is multifactorial, however, it can be triggered by the reduction of functional capacity, mainly of the lower limbs. **Objective:** To correlate the fall event and risk factors in diabetic elderly. **Methodology:** Cross-sectional and correlational study, approved by the Ethics Committee in Research with Human Subjects (CAAE: 0127.0.106.000-09) and composed of elderly diabetic patients accompanied by medical professionals in a nucleus of attention to the elderly of a Brazilian public university. The instruments used were: semi-structured questionnaire with clinical data (age, gender, body mass index (BMI) and number of falls), Timed Up & Go test (TUG) and Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB). **Statistical analysis** used the Spearman correlation. **Results:** Diabetic elderly (70.37 ± 6.65 years) were matched according to gender and age (1: 1 ratio), two groups were selected for correlation analysis, one with 28 men and the other with 28 women. In the correlation between genders, of the variables age and BMI with number of falls, TUG and SPPB, only women presented correlations between age and number of falls ($\rho = 0.382$, $p = 0.045$), TUG ($\rho = 0.529$, $p = 0.004$) and SPPB ($\rho = -0.547$, $p = 0.003$), as well as between BMI and TUG ($\rho = 0.532$, $p = 0.004$). **Discussion:** These findings corroborate the current literature, demonstrating that the reduction of functional capacity during aging, when associated with the presence of chronic diseases, increases the risk of falls. **Conclusion:** As the age advances, the elderly diabetic women become more susceptible to falls than men, possibly due to reduced functional capacity of the lower limbs and gait speed. And overweight seems to influence the reduction of the pace of walking.

Keywords: Functional capacity; Diabetes mellitus; Elderly; Fall

*Correspondence to Author:

Oliveira, R.C.S

Discente do Curso de Fisioterapia da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

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