

Fear of Falling and Physical Activities: A Comparison Between Rural and Urban Elderly People

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Abstract : Context: The aging population is growing all over the world and maintaining physical activity is essential for healthy aging. However, fear of falling is a major obstacle to physical activity among the elderly. The aim of this study is to investigate and compare the relationship between fear of falling and physical activity in Iranian urban and rural elderly. Research Aim: The main aim of this cross-sectional analytical study is to investigate and compare the relationship between fear of falling and physical activity in Iranian rural and urban elderly. Methodology: The study used simple non-probability sampling to select 350 participants aged 60 years and older from rural and urban areas of Konarak, Sistan and Baluchistan provinces in Iran. The Persian versions of the Falls Efficacy Scale - International, Rapid Physical Activity Assessment, Activities of Daily Living, and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living questionnaires were used to assess fear of falling and physical activity. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation tests. Findings: The study found a statistically significant negative correlation between fear of falling and physical activity, as measured by ADL, IADL, and RAPA1(aerobic), in all elderly and rural and urban elderly ($p < 0.001$). Fear of falling was higher in rural areas, while physical activity levels measured by ADL and RAPA1 were higher in urban areas. No significant difference was found between the two groups in IADL and RAPA2 (strength and flexibility) scores. Theoretical Importance: This study highlights the importance of considering the fear of falling as a significant obstacle to proper physical activity, especially among the elderly living in rural areas. Furthermore, the study provides insight into the difference between rural and urban elderly people in terms of fear of falling and physical activity. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures: Data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson correlation tests. Questions Addressed: The study attempted to answer the following questions: Is there a relationship between fear of falling and physical activity in Iranian urban and rural elderly people? Is there a difference in fear of falling and physical activity between rural and urban elderly? Conclusion: Fear of falling is a major obstacle to physical activity among the elderly, especially in rural areas. The study found a significant negative correlation between fear of falling and physical activity in all elderly and rural and urban elderly. In addition, urban and rural elderly have differences in aerobic activity levels, but they do not differ in terms of flexibility and strength. Therefore, proper interventions are required to ensure that the elderly can maintain physical activity, especially in rural and deprived areas.

Keywords : aged, fear of falling, physical activity, urban population, rural population

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