Reviewer's report

Title: An exploration of risk for recurrent falls in two geriatric care settings

Version: 2 Date: 13 August 2013

Reviewer: Kristina Akesson

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In this study the authors evaluate risk factors for falls in two different care settings; a geriatric rehabilitation unit (GRU) and a long stay veterans’ unit (LSVU). The use or non-use of walking aids is of particular interest in this pilot study. The units differ in terms of age between the patients, gender distribution and duration of stay; LSVU patients are older by about 6 years, mainly male and stay close to 2 years vs a month and a half at the GRU.

Single and multiple falls rates were higher at the LSVU. Age was associated with more falls at the GRU. The use of walking aids was not associated with recurrent falls in either setting.

The study is well described and data thoroughly analysed, whereas the findings are negative in view of the hypothesis. The authors are well aware of study limitations. Nevertheless a few comments should be addressed.

Comments

1. Introduction: the aims of the study appear to vary between general factors related to propensity to falls or specific factors such as walking aids. The final paragraph should more clearly state the main aim of the study.

2. Materials and methods: it is unclear how the authors have dealt with the likely effect of mortality particularly at the LSVU or are patients also discharged to other care settings? Are patients from the GRU mainly discharged to their homes? This may mirror also comorbidity and general mobility. It is difficult to understand if patients at the LSVU also could be more bedridden rather than more mobile.

3. Results: The number of tables should be reduced. Table 5 and 6 can easily be reported in the text alone.

4. Based on the fact that the settings are vastly different – are direct comparison of risk meaningful, whereas the descriptive differences are?

5. Discussion: limitations are well addressed and length of stay is very likely important since over the two years the study population at the LSVU will mainly be an assessment of the same population, whereas the GRU includes a relatively rapid turnover and many more individuals are assessed. Again suggesting that the comparative analysis is questionable.

6. Conclusions: the conclusion should be much shortened and highlight the conclusion rather than an additional discussion.
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests