Reviewer's report

Title: Falls and consequent injuries in hospitalized patients: Effects of an interdisciplinary fall prevention program.

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2006

Reviewer: M. Clare Robertson

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper reports the fall and fall injury rates in three clinical departments before and after the introduction of a fall prevention programme in a 300-bed public hospital in the City of Zurich in 2000. Unfortunately there is no indication as to whether the various components of the prevention programme were actually implemented and resulted in changes to patient care.

No significant changes were noted in fall or fall injury rates during the study observation time of 1999 to 2003. The authors acknowledge the limitations of the study design (before and after implementation) and the lack of a measure of adherence. They suggest that it may have been lack of adherence by hospital staff and "altered" patient characteristics (patients may possibly have been frailer in the later years of the study) that resulted in the apparent lack of effect of the prevention programme. They suggest reassessment of fallers in the future and action research as a means of motivating hospital staff to implement the programme.

This paper will not inspire changes to hospital fall prevention policy but important points about falls in hospitals are clearly made and the paper will be of interest to researchers in the field.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. Abstract/Results: For the sentence beginning "From 3,842 falls," it is unclear whether the numbers of falls here relate to the years 1999 to 2003, or the years after introduction of the fall prevention program. This can be avoided by changing the order of the sentences in this section.

2. Abstract/Conclusions: The last sentence is very long and the exact meaning not clear.

3. Table 1: I am unclear why the title includes the word "Hospital."

4. Table 2: The title of this table does not make sense to me.

5. Table 3: This table would be easier to follow if the numbers of falls in each year made up the first entry (row) in the table, rather than having the numbers of falls in the heading of each column. A percent sign in brackets is missing after "No injuries."

6. In the title of Table 3 it would be preferable to use "from 1999 to 2003" rather than "across the years."
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
None

**Which journal?**: Not appropriate for BMC Medicine: an article whose findings are important to those with closely related interests and more suited to BMC Health Services Research

**What next?**: Offer publication in BMC Health Services Research after minor essential revisions

**Quality of written English**: Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review**: No

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