Reviewer's report

Title: Factors associated with recognition and prioritization for falling, and the effect on fall incidence in community dwelling older adults

Version: Date: 7 June 2015

Reviewer: Ian D Cameron

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written paper reporting on a component of a large randomised trial. The aim of the study is clear and is “to examine what proportion of older adults their falls risk and prioritize for fall-preventive care, and which factors are associated with this prioritization.” The analyses are appropriate and the conclusions are reasonable.

Major compulsory revisions

The authors should comment on additional interpretations of their results. Firstly, older people who would be expected to be at higher risk of future falls (with a history of multiple falls, severe fear of falling, use of walking aid) tend to recognise this and prioritize fall prevention care. This is helpful information for priority setting with older people. However, only 10% of older people likely to be at increased risk of falls, prioritize this. This suggests, as in other issues related to older people (for example hip protectors), that most older people at risk of increased falls and falls related injuries do not recognise this and are therefore unlikely to readily participate in falls prevention programs. They are also unlikely to have optimal adherence to the program that is offered. The authors are correct that attention to adherence is a key factor in establishing effectiveness of falls prevention programs at a population level.

Secondly, a potential further explanation of lack of difference in prioritization and falls risk in the second six months of the study is that some falls risk factors are likely to be of limited duration (for example reduced mobility after illness) and therefore may not be predictive in the longer term.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.