



# aged care insite

NEWS

INDUSTRY

SPECIALTY

CLINICAL

WORKFORCE

TECH

RADIO+TV

SUBSCRIBE

ADVERTISE

JOBS

Home | Clinical Practice | Hopes historic WHO report on falls prevention has global impact



## Hopes historic WHO report on falls prevention has global impact

By: Caroline Riches in Clinical Practice, Top Stories June 9, 2021 0

Experts hope that recommendations in a new technical report from the World Health Organization (WHO) will reduce global suffering and loss as a result of falls.

The report, called "Step safely: Strategies for preventing and managing falls across the life-course", urges governments, health professionals and practitioners around the world to take urgent action to prevent and manage falls using evidence-based strategies.

Falls take the lives of 684 000 people worldwide each year and leave another 172 million with a short- or long-term disability. It's a significant – and rapidly growing – global public health problem, with fall-related deaths having risen far faster than any other type of injury over the last two decades.

Ageing populations and increasing urbanisation are chiefly to blame.

The WHO commissioned researchers from The George Institute for Global Health and the UNSW School of Population Health in Sydney to conduct a review of high-quality global evidence on falls prevention.

Professor Rebecca Ivers, Head of the UNSW School of Population Health and Founding Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Injury Prevention and Trauma Care, was an executive editor of the report and co-authored the evidence synthesis that informed it.

She says the fact that the WHO has poured time and resources into assessing falls prevention strategies is historic.

"The WHO has never done anything on falls before," she told *Aged Care Insite*. "It's recognition of the rising impact falls are having on older people across the world."

Ivers says falls prevention can't be tackled as a one-off health issue because they affect people throughout their lives.

Her evidence synthesis report looks at falls prevention strategies for five key population groups: children and adolescents, people in occupational settings, community dwelling older adults, older people living in residential care facilities, and older people receiving care in hospitals.

### Prevention is key

The vast majority of deaths from falls occur in low and middle-income countries and most can be prevented, says the report.

### RECENT POSTS



Retirement Village: what do you buy if you don't want the retirement or the village? opinion  
June 24, 2021



Blood transfusions at home and in aged care are 'safe and effective'  
June 24, 2021



Vulnerable Australians should not rely on the 3G network  
June 23, 2021



Just 'Ask Annie': new app developed to support home care workers  
June 23, 2021



Aged care faces workforce 'exodus' if jobs become mandatory  
June 21, 2021

### CONNECT WITH US



### READ OUR LATEST EMAG



eMag archive

Prevention is key, says Ivers, because many health systems around the world "aren't set up to deal with the health problems of ageing".

"In Australia, by contrast, falls are well recognised by health departments because we know what the cost is," she said.

Appropriate strategies go a long way to prevent falls, says the report.

For older people, these include strength and balance training, home safety assessments and modifications for those with mobility or visual impairments, and medication reviews (in the knowledge that psychotropic medications can increase the risk of falls).

But while the WHO report is a step in the right direction, it needs to be supported by implementation strategies at the national and local level to understand which recommendations are having the greatest impact, says Ivers.

"The report recommends that people collect data to monitor the number of injuries and to measure the effectiveness of interventions," she said.

"If you don't have data it's hard to know whether strategies are working or not."

**Do you have an idea for a story?**

Email [conor.burke@apned.com.au](mailto:conor.burke@apned.com.au)



## Get the news delivered straight to your inbox

Receive the top stories in our weekly newsletter [SIGN UP NOW](#)

Tagged with: [FALLS](#) [FALLS PREVENTION](#) [THE GEORGE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH](#)  
[UNSW SCHOOL OF POPULATION HEALTH](#)

### LEAVE A COMMENT

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Name \*

Email \*

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

#### ABOUT US

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertise with us](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
- [Editorial guidelines](#)
- [Privacy policy](#)
- [Terms of use](#)

#### SUBSCRIBE TO ENEWSLETTERS

Email Address\*

First Name\*

Last Name\*

Company Name

Please select which forms of communication you would like to receive from us  
 E-newsletters  Partner messages