

Exercise Habit is Associated with Lower Fall Risks among Elderly People Living in Urban Areas

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EXERCISE HABIT IS ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER FALL RISKS AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE LIVING IN URBAN AREAS

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In the present superaged society that has limited financial resources for efficient health care for the elderly population, fall prevention is an urgent issue. The present study examined the relationship between exercise habit and fall risks among elderly people living in an urban area. A total of 1,014 elderly people (age: 65-89 years) living in Osaka City were enrolled in this study and assigned to 5 different age groups. The motor abilities of the participants were evaluated by the Functional Reach Test (FRT) and the Timed Up and Go (TUG) test, with the cutoff value for fall risk set at 25 cm and 13.5 s, respectively. Exercise habit (≤ 1 h, 1-2 h, or ≥ 2 h per week), history of recent falls, and anxiety about falling were also assessed using a questionnaire modified from the checklist by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan. The results of the FRT and TUG tests were increasingly poorer in higher age groups. History of recent falls and anxiety about falling were also more frequent in higher age groups (all $p < .05$). The prevalence of exercise habits was similar among the age groups. In the age groups >75 years, there was an association between exercise habit and a decrease in fall risks, based on the FRT results (all $p < .05$). The mean FRT value of the participants with the greatest exercise habit was equivalent to that of the generation 10 years younger with the lowest exercise habit. There was an association between exercise habit and decreased anxiety about falling ($p = .003$), but not with a history of recent falls. Our results suggest that exercise should be promoted among elderly people living in urban areas to contribute to fall prevention.