

Establishing a Community Falls Network in Western Australia

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Background

The aged care sector and health industry play a key role in engaging with community for falls prevention. Health professionals have a broad understanding of required services, programs, and policy for falls prevention in Western Australia (WA). Whilst other groups exist to support falls prevention in different settings, previously there have been no formal networks for health professionals working with community-dwelling older adults in falls prevention. The aim of the Community Falls Network (CFN) was to bring together a diverse group of health professionals and community workers to discuss key issues and solutions for community-based fall prevention in WA.

Activity

The CFN consists of triannual meetings, with representatives from nursing, allied health, community care coordination, aged care and health promotion disciplines from government, private, and not-for-profit sectors. The CFN objectives are to increase knowledge of roles, challenges and opportunities; advocate for community falls prevention; explore joint best-practice; and improve a cohesive approach to community falls prevention. To assess the success of the network in its inaugural year, a survey was conducted with members to assess relevance, benefits and collaboration opportunities within the network.

Conclusion

A gap was identified for a network to address the impact of community falls through professionals that work directly with community-dwelling older adults. The CFN is a cross-discipline and sectorial group that could systematically influence falls prevention. Quantitative and qualitative survey results were analysed and themed for comparisons and recommendations made to further develop the network to support falls prevention and healthy ageing in WA.