Working with Local Governments and their Public Health Plans to prevent falls

Presentation type: 15 minute oral

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Background:
Local governments are a key point of contact for connecting with community members. Injury Matters collaborated with a local government (LG) in metropolitan Perth to identify and address high rates of fall-related injuries within their LG area. After consulting the LG's *Strategic Community Plan* and *Draft Public Health Plan,* a project was developed to reduce falls and fall-related injuries among residents 60 years and over. This presentation will discuss strategies and outcomes of a comprehensive falls prevention project implemented by Injury Matters in collaboration with the LG.

Activity:
The project incorporated population level initiatives and individualised activities for high-risk older adults. Strategies included an eight-week *Stepping On* program, promotion of local falls prevention services, and falls prevention awareness activities, including resources, peer education workshops, and a health worker workshop. Activities were evaluated to measure reach and awareness. *Stepping On* was evaluated to measure fall-preventing behaviours and physiological changes.

Conclusion:
Project activities directly reached over 188 people through the delivery of four workshops, eight *Stepping On* sessions (12 participants), two community displays and resources to five locations. By the end of the health worker workshop, peer education workshops and *Stepping On* program 95.2% (n=60) participants agreed falls are preventable (n=60). At the completion of the workshops, participants were aware of risk factors (98.1%, n=51) and strategies for preventing falls (90.4%, n=47). Most (91.6%, n=11) *Stepping On* participants reported improvements in fall-preventing behaviours. Working collaboratively with LGs can support evidence-informed grassroots falls prevention initiatives specific to the needs of local residents.