The impact of training non-allied health professionals about falls prevention exercises.

S Clark[1], C Wold, R Meade, R Sweeney
[1]Injury Matters, Perth, WA

Conference Topic:
Preventing (development and evaluation of interventions)

Delivery Mode:
Oral presentation

Background

Falls were the leading injury cause of hospitalisations in adults over 65 years in Western Australia (WA) in 2012.[i] Traditionally in WA, falls prevention exercise training programs have been targeted to upskill allied health professionals, with limited training opportunities available for non-allied health professionals. To equip non-allied health professionals to implement effective falls prevention strategies related to strength and balance, the Stay On Your Feet® program, provided by Injury Matters in partnership with the Department of Health WA, developed and delivered the Active Balance program.

Methods

The program, consisting of a four-hour workshop, resources and ongoing support, has been delivered to 67 non-allied health professionals since its implementation in April 2017. To measure the impact of the training, self-reported pre and post surveys were completed to measure awareness, knowledge and confidence of falls prevention strategies. An annual impact survey and case studies were also completed to evaluate participant's practice and client outcomes. Paired t-tests were conducted for statistical analysis using Microsoft Excel.

Results

Pre and post paired t-tests show significant increases in participants' knowledge of exercises to prevent falls ($p < 0.0001$, n=33), confidence to identify people with a falls risk ($p < 0.0001$, n-44), confidence to perform falls screening ($p < 0.0001$, n=43) and confidence to select appropriate exercises to improve balance in older adults ($p < 0.0001$, n=43). Case studies indicate participants have built falls prevention strategies into their practice and have seen improvements in client mobility, strength and confidence to complete everyday activities.

Conclusions

Training and supporting non-allied health professionals can improve awareness, knowledge and confidence to deliver evidence-informed falls prevention exercise strategies to older adults.

Reference

i. Hendrie D, Miller T, Randall S, Brameld K, Moorin R. Incidence and costs of injury in WA 2012. Perth: Chronic Disease Prevention Directorate Department of Health WA; 2016.