

PATIENT SAFETY HUDDLE NEWS

LOOK BACK

Identify safety or quality issues from last 24 hours/shift.

LOOK AHEAD

Anticipate safety or quality issues in next 24 hours/shift.

FOLLOW UP

Further review of significant issues.

Falls



Globally, falls are a major public health problem. An estimated 684,000 fatal falls occur each year, making it the second leading cause of unintentional injury death, after road traffic injuries.¹ For example, past Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, died at a Florida hospital following a recent fall at his Palm Beach home.

In Canada, as the population ages and life expectancy increases, mortality rates associated with falls have increased by 111% between 2001 and 2019 among adults aged 65 years and older.²

Various biological, behavioural, social and environmental factors contribute to falls. Some examples of these factors are:

Biological

- Decreased mobility and balance
- Muscle weakness
- visual impairment

- Acute or chronic illness and disability

Behavioural

- History of falls
- Fear of falling
- Poor nutrition and/or hydration
- Lack of physical activity
- Inappropriate footwear and clothing

Social

- Low income
- Low education
- Inadequate housing
- Lack of support networks and social isolation
- Limited access to appropriate health or social services

Environmental

- Home hazards:
- Clutter, lack of stair railings,

loose rugs or other tripping hazards

- Lack of grab bars in the bathroom
- Poor lighting, especially on stairs

Adults aged 65 years and older are expected to represent over a fifth of the Canadian population by 2068,³ so continuing to monitor fall-related injuries and deaths and examining associated risk factors are important measures to help guide and inform prevention efforts.⁴

Here at TBRHSC, our Falls Prevention Committee is doing just that. During monthly meetings, committee members review data from fall-related incident reports, examine risk factors that may be contributing to these in-hospital falls, and determine ways to help prevent falls.

This month, the Falls Prevention Committee is launching a campaign focused on making all staff (both clinical and non-clinical), as well as patients and families, aware of the role they can play in falls prevention. Knowing that one of the most common reasons for patient falls is reaching for items, we are encouraging everyone to clear the overbed tables and ensure they are within patients' reach prior to meal delivery times. Look for the posters that remind us:

**When meals are on the way,
make room for the tray!**

Everyone has a role to play!

¹World Health Organization, 2021 ²Government of Canada Data Blog, 2023 ³Statistics Canada, 2022 ⁴Government of Canada Data Blog, 2023