Cause and Outcome of Preventable Accidents in the Elderly; an Epidemiologic Study

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Abstract

Introduction: With the growing population of the elderly in societies, the medical problems of this age range also increases. Preventable accidents are among these problems. More than 5 million people die as the result of these injuries each year. Therefore, the present study was done aiming to evaluate the causes and outcomes of preventable accidents in the elderly.

Methods: The present study is a retrospective cross-sectional one, performed on elderly patients admitted to a hospital during 2 years. Required data were gathered using census method via a checklist consisting of demographic data, cause of the accident, length of hospital stay, number of times revisiting the hospital, and final outcome. Data were then descriptively analyzed using SPSS 16 statistical software.

Results: 2336 patients with the mean age of 72.24 ± 9.02 years were evaluated (50.7% female). The most common causes of accidents were falling with 1033 (44.2%) cases, intentional poisoning with 382 (16.4%) cases, and unintentional poisoning with 360 (15.4%) cases, respectively. Mean length of hospital stay was 5 ± 7.7 days. 144 (6.2%) elderly patients died during the study period. Type of accident (p < 0.001) and final outcome (p < 0.001) were significantly different between the sexes.

Conclusion: Based on the findings of the present study, falling, intentional poisoning and unintentional poisoning, respectively, were the most common causes of preventable accidents in the studied elderly population. Most cases were discharged after partial recovery and the 3 afore-mentioned causes had higher prevalence in women. The most frequent outcomes were complete recovery in poisoning, partial recovery in falling, and death in poisoning and burn.

Keywords: Aged; accident prevention; patient outcome assessment; poisoning; accidental falls