

3rd International Conference and Expo on

Physiotherapy

October 13-15, 2016 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Self-perceived handicap and balance performance among elderly with disturbances in balance: A correlational study

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Background & Purpose: Balance disturbance due to dizziness is one of the major areas of concern of the elderly. Altered balance interferes with moving about freely and performing activities of daily living. An individual's perception of handicap due to balance disturbances and actual balance performance on balance measures may vary. The study was done to estimate the correlation between self-perceived handicap and balance performance.

Method: Balance was measured using Berg balance scale (BBS) and self-perceived handicap was measured using dizziness handicap inventory (DHI) in a sample of 40 elderly subjects. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation, multiple regression analysis and t-tests to estimate correlation between BBS and DHI.

Results: 70% of the subjects in the study group had medium levels of fall risk as inferred from BBS scores. DHI scores indicated 60% of subjects perceiving their handicap as moderate, 32.5% as mild and 7.5% as severe. Strong negative correlation ($r=-0.67$, $p<0.001$) was found between the DHI and BBS scores.

Conclusion: In individuals with disturbed balance, self-perceived handicap evaluated with DHI correlates with actual balance dysfunction as estimated by BBS scores.

Biography

Sanjay Eapen Samuel has completed his Master's degree in Physiotherapy with specialization in Neurosciences from Manipal University and PhD in Geriatric Neurorehabilitation. He is Professor and Principal of Laxmi Memorial College of Physiotherapy, Mangalore. He is Member of Board of Studies and Member of Academic Council at the university. He has academic teaching experience of over 18 years and has guided 39 Post-graduate students of Physiotherapy. He has served as Invited Speaker at conferences, workshops and symposiums in educational institutions in several universities and organizations, and has presented more than 30 papers in reputed conferences in India and abroad. His research interests include adult neuro-rehabilitation, geriatrics and ergonomics.

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