



Impaired balance and fall risk in people with multiple sclerosis

av

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Abstract

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The symptoms from the neurological disease multiple sclerosis vary from person to person and over time. Impaired balance is common in people with multiple sclerosis and can lead to falls. Fall frequency is high in people with multiple sclerosis, above 50%. Multiple sclerosis affects not only the person having the disease but also their next of kin. To be able to reduce fall risk it is important to know when, why and where people with multiple sclerosis fall, and how to improve balance and reduce falls with exercise. It is also important to know how the falls affect the residing next of kin to people with multiple sclerosis.

The overall aim of this thesis was to gain enhanced knowledge by investigating when and why people with MS fall and how these falls possibly affect their next of kin, and also to evaluate the effects and perceptions of participating in a specific balance exercise.

Data were gathered using four different data collections, and this thesis contains both qualitative and quantitative data.

The major finding in this thesis is that people with multiple sclerosis fall in the course of everyday life activities, most often in their own homes due to various intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Balance can be improved and falls reduced and everyday life may be made easier and facilitated after participating in the CoDuSe balance exercise. This is important also for the next of kin, since they are adapting, adjusting and renouncing their activities due to the falls of the PwMS, in order to make it work for the whole family.

Keywords: Balance, exercise, falls, falls efficacy, gait, multiple sclerosis, next of kin, physiotherapy, qualitative research, randomized controlled trial

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