Experiences with a Balance/Mobility Program: Case Study in FM

Dana N. Rutledge, PhD, RN (drutledge@fullerton.edu)
Jacob Melendez, BS, Daniela Johansen, BS, Debra J. Rose, PhD

Background

- Persons with fibromyalgia (FM), a chronic pain condition, have altered gait patterns and may be at risk for falls.
- Those factors may account for increased fall risk for persons with FM who have a history of falls or postural instability.

Purpose

- To describe experiences with a balance/mobility program.
- To determine if persons with FM at risk for falls can benefit from balance/mobility programs.
- To evaluate the efficacy of the FallProof program.

Method

- 12-week program - comprehensive balance/mobility program designed for community dwelling older adults at moderate-to-high risk for falls (Rose, 2010).
- Targeted systems contributing to postural stability and mobility:
  - Balance (Fullerton Advanced Balance Scale; 0-40)
  - Gait velocity (calculated from 30-ft walk: ft/sec)
  - Stroop C (errors)
  - Stroop C Response Time (sec)
  - Stroop C (errors) 
  - Stroop C Response Time (sec)
  - Walk velocity (ft/sec), maximal *
  - Walk velocity (ft/sec), preferred *
  - Fullerton Advanced Balance Scale (0 to 40)

Results

- **Sample and Analysis**
  - * *"women, age 56-77 years, took part.
  - Older woman dropped the class (week 5) stating she found the exercise difficult.
  - Class attendance for other participants varied: 54.97% classes, 24.97% minutes possible.

- **Timeline**
  - T1 (baseline)
  - T2 (pre-program, 12 weeks later)
  - T3 (post-program)
  - T4 (12 weeks later)

- **Fall incidence (monthly fall data)**

- **Implications and Recommendations for Future Studies**
  - Findings support further evaluation of balance/mobility programs for persons with FM who have a moderate to high fall risk.
  - Future study is needed to determine if a class devoted specifically to persons >65 years could allow for greater progression in activities and possibly lead to clinically significant changes in performance (physical/cognitive).