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CAN A MULTIMEDIA FALL PREVENTION TREATMENT PROGRAM CHANGE BEHAVIOR AND PREVENT FALLS?

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Purpose: The Multimedia Fall Prevention program is designed to address the needs of seniors who have fallen in the last year or regularly lose their balance. Various interventions may be recommended after a fall, but few address underlying behaviors. We evaluated the influence of this program on self-reported prevention measures and prospective falls.

Methods: In a randomized, double-blind trial, Seniors (n=212; 60-96 years, mean=79, SD=7) kept daily logs and were telephoned weekly by blinded independent research associates.

Participants completed Standard (interview) or Multimedia treatment (Standard +1-2 multimedia sessions). Sessions included interactively viewing multimedia vignettes emphasizing key fall threats. Time to record only new fall-prevention measures (FPM) and falls were examined for up to 56 weeks of follow-up. Cox survival models were evaluated with Gender, Age and Disadvantage as predictors including all main and interaction effects.

Results: No independent effects or interactions due to Age or Disadvantage were observed for time to record a 2nd FPM, but there was a significant effect of Gender; such that females (n=152) recorded a 2nd FPM sooner than males (n=60; Wald z=5.99, p=.014, OR=1.72). There was also a Treatment X Gender interaction trend; whereas no difference was observed among males, females who had Multimedia treatment were more likely to report a 2nd new FPM sooner than females who completed Standard treatment. Among all subjects who participated at least 12 weeks (n=171), both males and females who had Multimedia sessions (n=111) were significantly less likely to experience 2 falls during the follow-up period than subjects who received only Standard treatment regardless of Gender (chi square=5.76, p=.0164, Hazard ratio=.42).

Conclusion: The Multimedia Fall Prevention program results in a significant reduction in falls and this outcome is observed in both sexes, even though males may not have reported new fall-prevention measures. Addition of Multimedia sessions to a Standard fall prevention program encourages females to take new fall prevention measures.