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Locations, Circumstances, and Outcomes of Falls in Patients with Glaucoma

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To characterize the locations, circumstances, and outcomes of falls in patients with varying degrees of glaucoma.

Design: Prospective cohort study

Methods: Patients with suspected or diagnosed glaucoma completed monthly calendars reporting falls. After each fall, a 30-item questionnaire was administered to determine fall location, circumstances, and injury. Mean deviation on visual field (VF) testing was used to categorize glaucoma severity.

Main Outcome Measures: Fall locations, circumstances, and outcomes.

Results: One-hundred forty-two patients experienced 330 falls. Falls were most likely to occur in/around the home (71%), and this likelihood did not vary significantly with severity of VF damage ($p > 0.2$). The most commonly cited fall circumstances were tripping, (43.6%), slipping (31.3%), uneven flooring (23.5%), and poor vision (15.9%). The circumstances related to falls did not vary by severity of VF damage ($p > 0.2$) except for poor vision, which was more frequently cited in individuals with more advanced VF damage ($p = 0.001$). Forty-three percent of falls resulted in some injury; and the likelihood of injury did not vary by severity of VF loss ($p = 0.60$) or any other factor except floor type and number of comorbidities ($p < 0.05$ for all). Falls in persons with more severe glaucoma were more likely to result in a fracture (9.4%) or an ER visit (18.8%), though these associations did not persist in multivariable models ($p > 0.5$ for all).

Conclusions:

Glaucoma patients fall mostly in/around the home and demonstrate similar fall circumstances across the spectrum of disease severity, suggesting that current fall-prevention-interventions, particularly those emphasizing home modification, may be an adequate starting point to prevent falls in this high-risk-group.

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