

Better together: An allied health led ‘one-stop shop’ for falls prevention.

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The Health Independence Program (HIP) at Werribee Mercy Hospital (WMH) is a new model of integrated care providing responsive and flexible access to the previously disparate programs of Community Rehabilitation, Specialist clinics (Continence, Falls and Balance), Complex Care and Residential in-Reach. Clients referred to the Falls and Balance clinic access the full resources of HIP to address individual risk factors for falling, working in collaboration with their General Practitioner. This minimises duplication and fragmentation of care by addressing client needs in one coordinated episode.

A review was undertaken to establish the extent to which the WMH Falls and Balance clinic has reduced the rate, fear and risk of falling amongst clients, and whether use of the HIP model has facilitated timely and integrated access to required services.

Method:

106 clients were assessed over a 12-month period. Pre and post clinic outcome measures were collected on the rate of falling (six months prior and during admission), fear of falling (Modified Falls Efficacy Scale) and physical indicators of falls risk (Timed Up and Go, Four Square Step Test, Five Times Sit to Stand). Information on falls risk reduction strategies recommended and allied health interventions provided was also collated.

Results:

Preliminary data analysis identifies a trend of decreased fear of falling, improved functional lower limb strength and dynamic balance. Collaboration between Continence and Falls and Balance clinics was particularly evident, with 36 shared clients (34.6% of those assessed); demonstrating coordinated interdisciplinary intervention.

Conclusion:

Falls are often multifactorial, with multiple interventions required to comprehensively address risk factors. Integrating the Falls and Balance clinic within HIP has allowed coordinated access to falls risk reduction services; particularly demonstrating the benefit of close collaboration between Continence and Falls and Balance clinics and establishes that an allied health led clinic can reduce rate, fear and risk of falling in a single episode of care.