Occupational therapist led environmental assessment and modification to prevent falls: Review of current practice in an Australian rural health service district

Alison Pighills, Anna Tynan, Linda Furness

1. Mackay Institute of Research and Innovation, Mackay Hospital and Health Service; 2. Division of Health and Medicine, James Cook University; 3. Research Support Team, Darling Downs Health; 4. Occupational Therapy Service, Darling Downs Health
Background

• Effectiveness of OT led \textit{environmental assessment and modification} (EAM)
• Incorporated into national and international falls prevention guidelines
• Not being implemented in practice

Aim

• To identify factors that support the local adoption of best practice EAM within a regional / rural health service

Research Question:
What is current occupational therapy practice for falls prevention and what are the barriers and enablers for the adoption of best practice EAM within a regional and rural health service?

Methods

• Concurrent mixed methods approach
• iPARIHS framework
I’d say we’ve got a really good core group of experienced occupational therapists who do this (EAM) as their day-to-day business.

Focus Groups …

. . .I think there isn’t a lot of research yet. . . So many variable[s] that impact on falls prevention. . .

It’s (EAM) part of our core skills and core business, really, because no one else - no other professions do that to the extent that we do it.
Results

• **Survey**: OTs aware of, confident in, and experienced with EAM
• **Audit**: None of the patients received a high intensity intervention for falls prevention
• **FG themes**: Confidence in, and awareness of evidence; knowledge and support from colleagues, referrers, patients and the organisation; time, cost and resources

Conclusion

• OTs reported that they carried out best practice EAM for falls prevention but the medical chart audit provided no evidence of this happening in practice

What next?

• TRIP-OT EAM research project in 2 regional / rural HHSs commencing August 2019

References:
