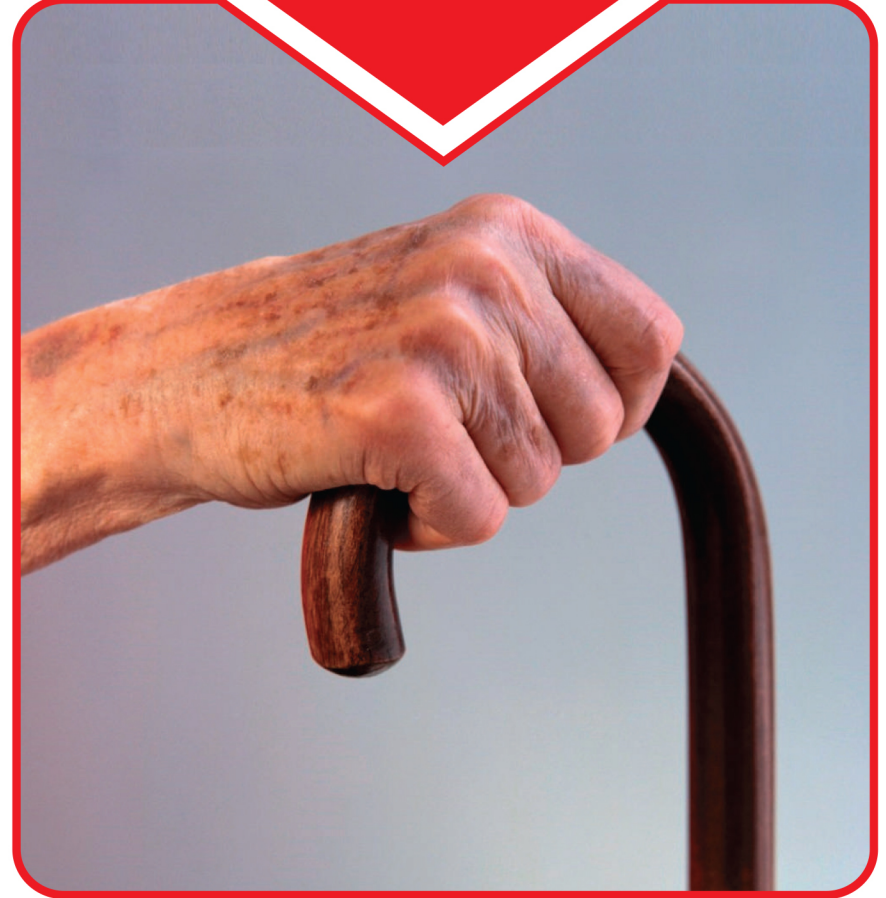


# Falls in Elderly

## A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES



For further information

### Outpatient Service Clinics

#### Community Health Centre (CHC)

Phone: +21 3486-1490/1491

#### Clifton Medical Service (CMS)

Phone: +21 9925 0051

#### Nazerali Walji Building (NW1)

Phone: +21 3486-1003/1004

#### Nazerali Walji Building (NW2)

Phone: +21 3486-5788/5789

This brochure provides information about common causes of falls in elderly patients. This has been developed in response to questions frequently asked by patients and their families



آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال، کراچی

The Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi.



## Introduction

Approximately 1 out of every 3 adults aged 65 or above will fall in his/her lifetime. Even though children fall much more than adults, falls are usually more serious in adults.

## Why do older people fall?

- Fluctuating blood pressure (e.g. Blood pressure falling in changing position, for instance when getting out of bed)
- Age-related changes in eyesight
- Losing a sense of balance during walking
- Muscle and bone weakness
- Use of multiple medicines

## Which illnesses increase risk of falling?

- In addition to the process of ageing, people having certain illnesses - such as diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, osteoporosis (weak bones), strokes, memory loss (e.g. dementia) and Parkinson's disease - that puts patients at risk of falls.
- Weight loss
- Bed-ridden or house bound patients

## Consequences of falls

Falls can result in serious injury such as broken bones and head injuries. In addition patients that fall develop a fear of falling, which limits their movements making them weaker and more prone to future falls.

## Why do patients who fall need medical attention?

Most patients who fall do not see their doctors unless they suffer major injury. It is important to understand that falls often happen because of underlying health problems which need to be assessed and treated. It is therefore important to get a medical consultation for the patient who is falling as one fall may increase the risk of subsequent falls.

## Where do most falls occur?

- Places where there are wet floors (such as bathrooms and kitchens, poor lighting, open wires).
- Stairs can be particularly dangerous for people with poor eye-sight, weak bones and memory problems.

## How can fall be prevented?

- A thorough medical evaluation (which can help identify illnesses and medications causing falls)
- Physically active life and regular exercise
- A healthy diet, which keeps bones and muscles strong
- Assistance through family support at home
- Avoiding wet floors and having good lighting
- Use of support bars or handrails in bathrooms
- Removing carpets, rugs and wires