Development of a Fall Risk Reduction Toolkit for Latino Older Adults across Kansas

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Introduction: Falls are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality among older adults. Many falls are preventable by increasing physical activity, reviewing and modifying medications, identifying vision problems, and modifying home safety. In 2010, Radebaugh et al. developed the Falling Less in Kansas (Falling LinKS) Toolkit, an education resource of evidence-based fall prevention and awareness strategies. The Toolkit was developed using a community-based participatory research approach tailored to the preferences of older adults in rural Kansas communities. Soon after, rural Latino older adults were identified as an underserved population with regard to fall prevention materials. Studies suggest involving members of a minority community in the development of written materials in their language is essential to the translation process, and is often overlooked.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to develop a culturally relevant Spanish version of the Falling LinKS Toolkit tailored to Latino older adults in Kansas. The intent of the Spanish-version Toolkit is to reduce disparity in healthcare education and reduce falls among Latino older adults in Kansas.

Methods: This study employed a mixed methods approach of qualitative focus groups and quantitative survey data. Spanish language focus groups were conducted with two samples of Latino adults over age 50 (n = 15 urban participants and n = 5 rural participants). Inductive thematic data analysis was used to evaluate results for readability, usability, aesthetic appeal, cultural relevance and linguistic fluency. A previously published, Latino-specific survey was adapted and administered to learn about participants’ fall history, risk factors, and attitudes.

Results: Eighty-eight percent of participants agreed that lifestyle changes and exercise would reduce fall risk, while 76% viewed falls as unpreventable accidents. Self-identified falling risk factors included dizziness, wearing sandals, and uneven walking surfaces. Overall, participants agreed the Toolkit was practical and user-friendly, and liked the home exercises and medication information sections. Participants also recommended including a discussion of dizziness and fall risk prevention, and safe footwear in inclement weather.

Conclusion: Focus group and survey feedback will guide creation of a culturally-relevant Spanish version of the Falling LinKS Toolkit for Latino older adults across Kansas that extends beyond literal translation. We hope this Toolkit will be extensively utilized and ultimately reduce the incidence of falls among Latino older adults.