

GP Fact Sheet: Postural Hypotension/Dizziness

Practice guidelines

- Risk factor studies show hypotension increases fall risk by **1.5-fold** in recurrent fallers (meta-analysis) (Deandrea et. al. 2010).
- Risk factor studies show dizziness and vertigo increase fall risk by **two-fold** in recurrent fallers (meta-analysis) (Deandrea et. al. 2010).



Key points

- Many patients have more than one contributory cause of dizziness which warrants further investigation, including:
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Peripheral vestibular disease
 - Adverse effect to medication(s)
 - Joint and muscle problems
 - Neurological disease
 - Metabolic or endocrine conditions
 - Impaired vision
 - Mental health problems (e.g. anxiety, depression)
- Diagnosis requires careful history for clarification, because the description of dizziness means different things to different people and arises from diverse causes:
 - Description of dizziness
 - Onset nature (sudden or gradual)
 - Frequency of dizziness attacks
 - Duration of the dizziness attack
 - Factors triggering, worsening or improving the dizziness attack
- Unexplained loss of consciousness or episodes of collapse should be referred as per usual practice for specialist review for further assessment or investigation.

Patient resources

- Patient education leaflets (click [here](#) for other patient flyers on the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission website):
 - Falls Prevention – [Postural Hypotension](#).
 - Falls Prevention – [Dizziness](#).

References

Cronin, H., & Kenny, R. A. (2010). [Cardiac causes for falls and their treatment](#). Clinics in Geriatric Medicine, 26(4), 539-567.

Maarsingh, O. R., Dros, J., Schellevis, F. G., van Weert, H. C., van der Windt, D. A., ter Riet, G., & van der Horst, H. E. (2010). [Causes of persistent dizziness in elderly patients in primary care](#). Annals of Family Medicine, 8(3), 196-205.

© Clemson L, et al (2017). Integrated solutions for sustainable fall prevention in primary care, the iSOLVE project: a type 2 hybrid effectiveness-implementation design. *Implementation Science*, 12(1), 12.

Updated 1 July 2018. Refer to the iSOLVE provider resource 'Preventing Falls in Older Patients in the Community' for more information.