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Reducing Falls in the Outpatient Setting at National Cancer Centre, Singapore

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Introduction

Fall injuries can have serious consequences related to physical functioning and quality of life of cancer patients due to bone fragility, low platelets and their weakened condition.

Aim

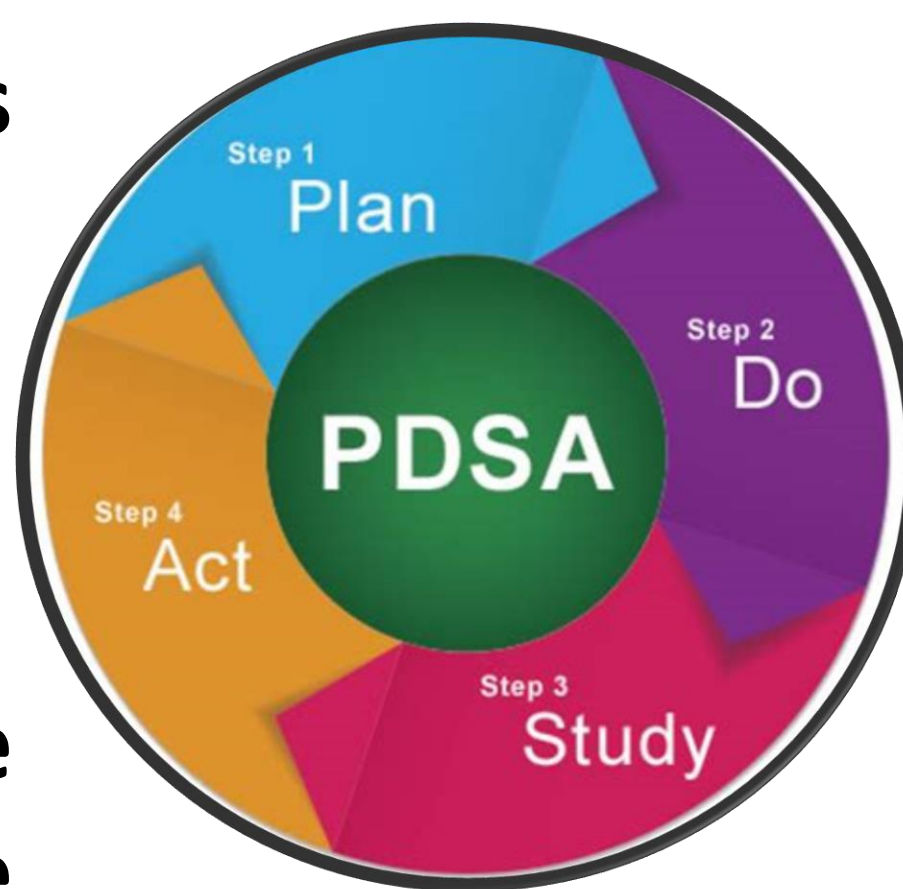
From January 2014 to June 2016, National Cancer Centre, Singapore (NCCS) has a total of 54 falls. Therefore, the aim of the project is to reduce fall rate from 7.19 falls per 100,000 to below 5.5 falls (2 falls) per 100,000 within nine months by:

- ❖ identifying the risk factors that contribute to the falls
- ❖ improve fall care processes
- ❖ design further interventions to reduce falls

Methodology

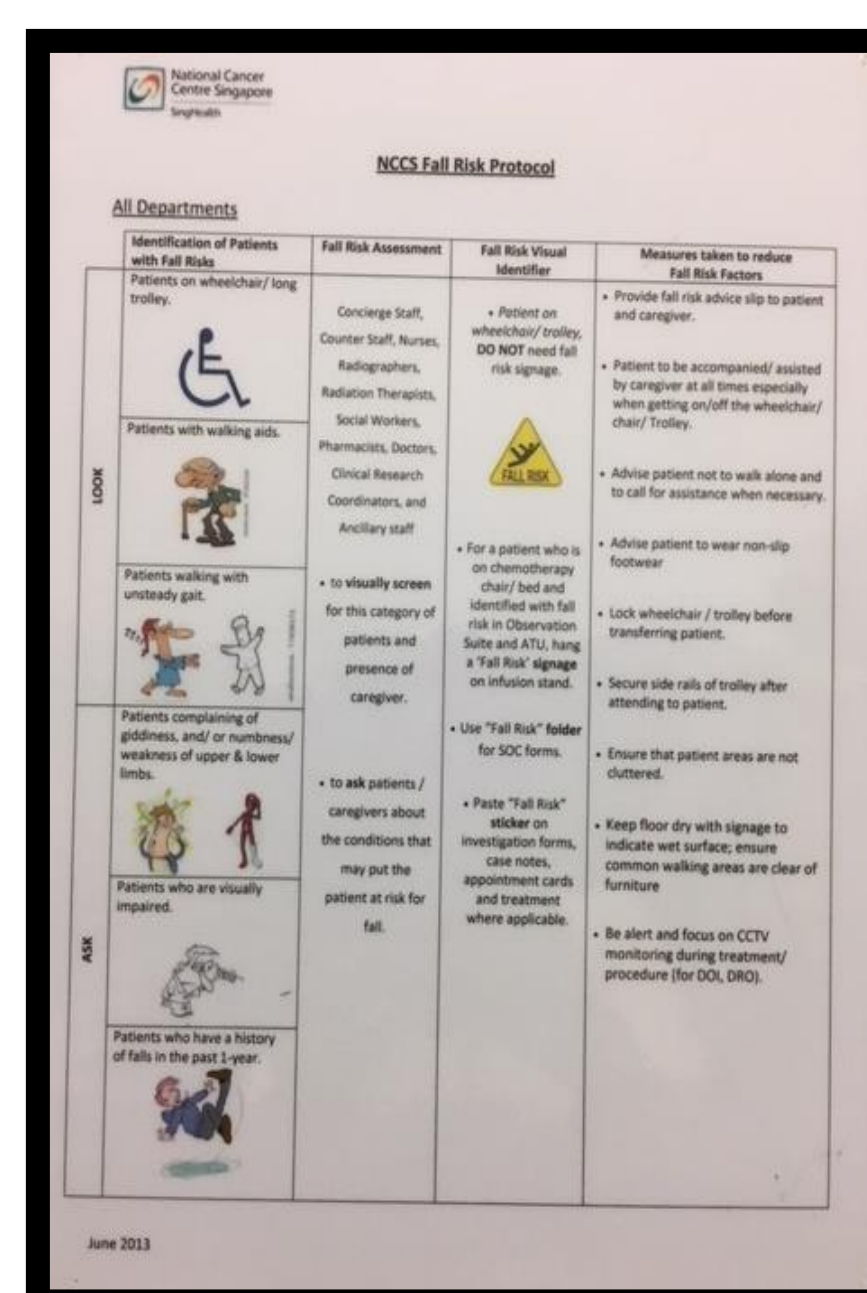
PDSA tool was embraced and the interventions were focused on:

Assessment



Fall risk **assessment** helped the team to make systematic assessment of patient's risk and the information is communicated to the staff at the next contact point.

- ❖ Registration staff/ Patient Relation Officer/ Nurse performs assessment by using NCCS fall risk protocol
- ❖ Visual assessment is done by assessing the patient's mobility status and verbal assessment by enquiring patient for any history of fall within the past one year
- ❖ Patients with increased risk are given fall risk advice leaflet that provides practical tips on reducing risk of fall
- ❖ Yellow colored sticker is pasted on the patient's left chest as visual identification as patients often move from one department to another during their continuum of cancer care
- ❖ Activation of fall risk alert in 1 Queue System to pre-empt other contact points



Education

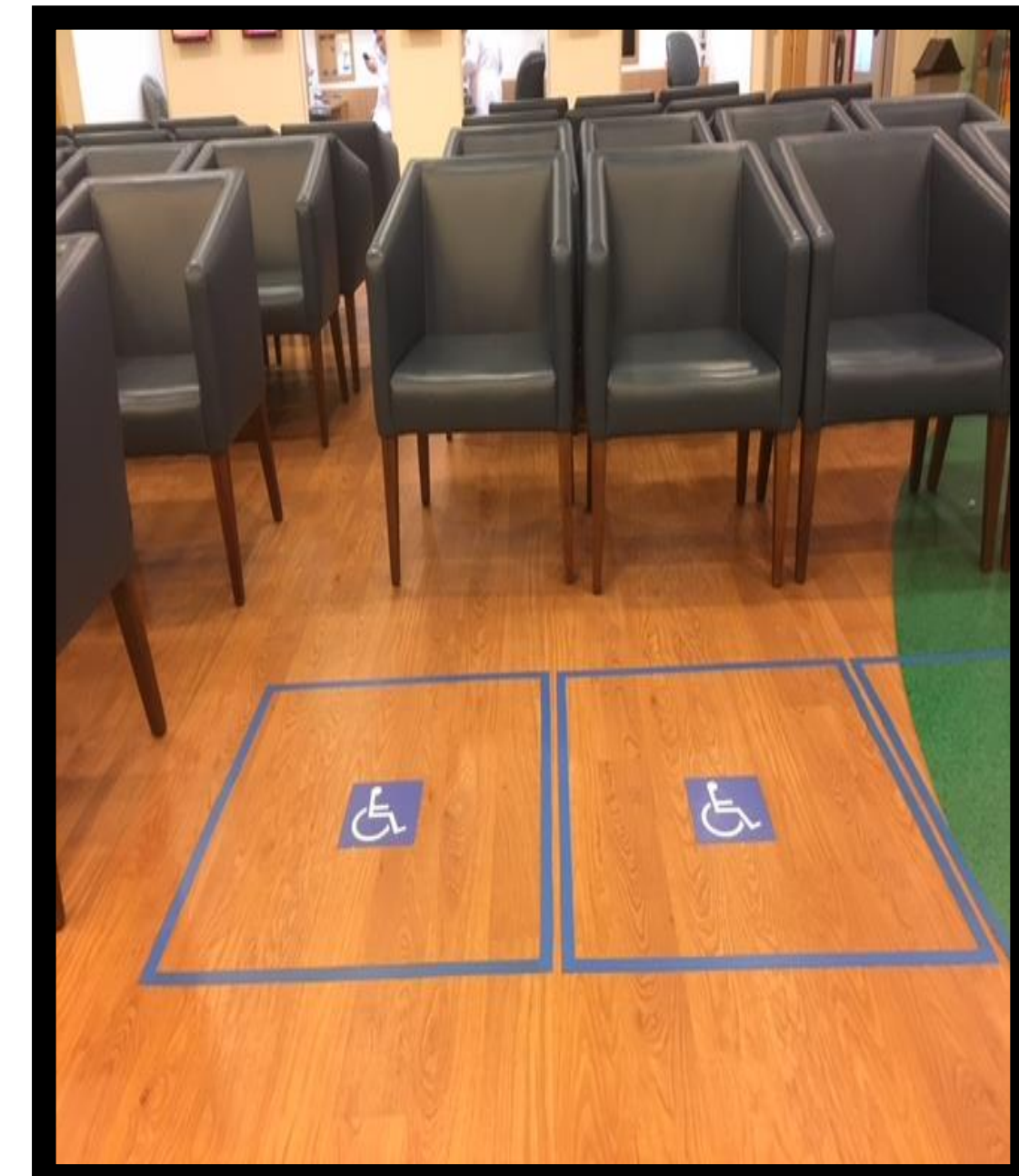
Promote awareness to patients and caregivers to understand the importance of safety measures that need to be adhered such as:

- ❖ cohort wheelchair patients in the view of counter staff for closer observation
- ❖ call healthcare professionals for assistance when needed
- ❖ safe use of wheelchair by locking wheels when stationary or upon transfer
- ❖ screen fall risk video at waiting areas
- ❖ use Nurse Call System that is available in the assisted toilets
- ❖ escalator safety

Environment

During day-to-day activities people are forced to interact with elements of physical **environment**. Hence environmental safety plays an imperative role in fall prevention.

- ❖ Enhancement of toilet sensors by prolonging door closing
- ❖ Improvement in toilet directional signage
- ❖ Allocation of priority seats.
- ❖ Signage on doors and floors for outwards swinging doors
- ❖ Installation of escalator safety advice



Results

Following the implementation of PDSAs the number of falls reduced from **7.19** to **5.46**.

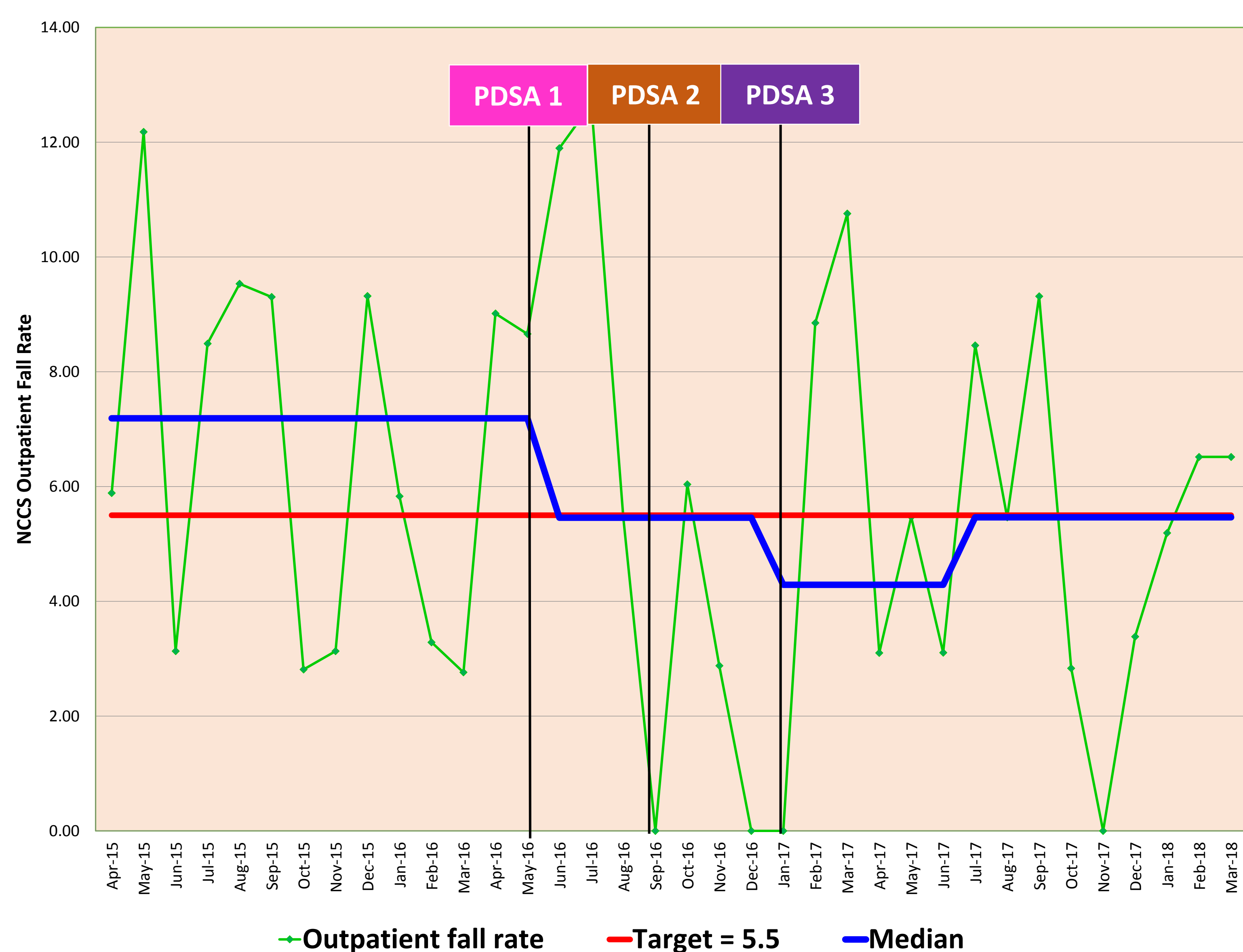
Target met for the next 6 months

Feb to June 2017: **4.29**

July 2017: **5.46**



NCCS Outpatient Fall Rate



Conclusion

Falls can be costly in terms of injury and loss of self confidence. Hence preventing falls has the potential to bring enormous benefits to patients, caregivers and to the health service. Assessment, education and environmental safety have reduced the number of falls as evidenced from outcome of the implementations.