

Loneliness and social isolation associated with higher fall risk in elderly people

10 December 2020



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Elderly people living alone or without social contact may be more likely to fall in their homes or be admitted to hospital for a fall, suggests a study published in *Scientific Reports*.

Daisy Fancourt and colleagues studied data from a total of 13,061 participants aged 60 and over, collected between 2002-2017 as part of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) survey. They analyzed self-reported data on falls, and where available, records of [hospital](#) admissions related to a fall.

Falls are a major public health issue among older people, and over 50% of participants reported experiencing a fall within the study period, while 9% had a hospital admission related to a fall. Living alone and having little social contact, which were used as measures of social isolation, were associated with a higher risk of both self-reported falls and falls requiring hospital admittance in [older adults](#). After accounting for socioeconomic and lifestyle factors, individuals living alone showed an 18% higher risk of reporting a fall than those living with a friend or relative. Individuals who had the

least social contact were 24% more likely to report a fall and 36-42% more likely to be admitted to hospital for a fall than those with the most social contact.

The authors suggest that living with another person and frequent [social contact](#) may reduce the risk of falling by alleviating stress and allowing risks to be identified. Further studies should explore whether lockdown and social distancing measures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic may have increased the incidence of falls in older individuals, according to the authors.

More information: A longitudinal analysis of loneliness, social isolation and falls amongst older people in England, *Scientific Reports* (2020). [DOI: 10.1038/s41598-020-77104-z](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-77104-z) , www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-77104-z

Provided by Nature Publishing Group

APA citation: Loneliness and social isolation associated with higher fall risk in elderly people (2020, December 10) retrieved 22 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-12-loneliness-social-isolation-higher-fall.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.