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"EVALUATION OF FEAR OF FALLING USING KANNADA FALLS EFFICACY SCALE – INTERNATIONAL (FES-I) IN ADULTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT: A PILOT STUDY"

HARSHADA N. NARVEKAR

Manipal College of Health Professions

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to determine the reliability and validity of the FES-I (Kannada), and to assess the level of fear of falling concern among visually impaired adults.

Method: The Kannada FES-I was administered to 46 Kannada speaking adults, aged 50 years and older. Proforma containing questions about clinical and demographics data was also applied. The internal consistency of the scale was provided by Cronbach's alpha. Scale dimensionality was explored by means of factor analysis. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to examine the correlation between the FES-I Kannada scores and visual acuity. We compared the differences in FES-I Kannada scores among respondents by cause and severity of visual impairment.

Results: The study included 38 patients with cataract and 8 with diabetic retinopathy. Mean age was 65.50 ± 7.72 years, with 24 female (52.2%) and 22 male (47.8%) respondents. Mean visual acuity was 0.48 ± 0.35 and 1.13 ± 0.63 LogMAR in the better and worse eye, respectively. 19 (41.3%) respondents showed high, 16 (34.8%) demonstrated moderate and 11 (23.9%) showed low fear of falling concern. The Kannada FES-I showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.895$). Factor analysis revealed four factors. The total Kannada FES-I score had poor correlation with the better eye ($p = 0.300$) and worse eye ($p = 0.939$) visual acuity. No statistically significant differences were seen for FES-I Kannada scores among cataract and diabetic retinopathy groups ($p = 0.276$) and among visual impairment categories ($p = 0.413$).

Conclusion: The Kannada FES-I showed adequate internal reliability for use among visually impaired adults. Majority of the respondents expressed high concern about fear of falling. This substantiate the need for inclusion of FOF and falls history assessment in adults with visual impairment.