

2018 NSW FALLS PREVENTION NETWORK SURVEY REPORT

An online survey was prepared using Survey Monkey to obtain feedback from members of the NSW Falls Prevention Network on the activities and resources provided by the network and to seek suggestions for further information, resources and activities that they would find helpful in their falls prevention roles. The survey questions are attached to the end of this report. The survey was circulated on the Falls Network email list in August and responses collected until end August 2018. A total of 256 responses were collected from a network membership of about 2280.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey of over 250 members of the NSW Falls Prevention Network found that the network provides a range of activities and information resources that are invaluable in the day to day practice of clinicians caring for older people and that it reaches professionals working in all Local Health Districts in NSW in a diverse range of roles and work settings. A selection of comments about the NSW Falls Prevention Network and its activities provided by survey respondents are listed below:

'The webinars have been absolutely fantastic!'
'Use the resources frequently, they are comprehensive, evidence based practice, multidisciplinary, concise and clear'
'You are doing an important job and I appreciate that you generously share presentations and knowledge'
'Quality in information presented in all forms is extremely high and speed of response has been wonderful'
'All current activities are very helpful'
'Appreciate the resources and education provided'
'The network is very comprehensive and useful'
'Webinars are great for professional development in falls prevention'
'Website very clear up to date and good graphics'
'Website clear, easy to read and find information'
'this work is fantastic and very relevant'

The network has diverse membership and this was evident in the respondents to the survey with 44% working in Allied Health (Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Exercise Physiologists), followed by Nursing (19.5%) and Health Managers (7.7%) and Health Promotion Practitioners (4.5%), Physical Activity Providers (4.1%) and Researchers (2.9%).

Network members work in a variety of settings and 47% respondents worked in the Public Hospital and 23.5% in Community Health, 11.4% in Residential Aged Care, and 8% each Community Service providers and working in Subacute/Rehabilitation, 7% in Health Promotion and 5.5% in Not for Profit and Private Practice.

All Local Health Districts in NSW were represented by 83% of survey respondents, with the rest from Interstate and overseas.

The majority (81%) of respondents reported having current roles in falls prevention including direct clinical roles with clients (53%), member of a falls committee (33%), running falls prevention classes

(27%), running exercise sessions (23%) and carrying out home assessments for patients/clients (22%) and being Falls Champions in their work areas (22%).

The resources respondents found most useful for their practice were; evidence based practice presentations on the NSW Falls Prevention Network website, the Staying active and on your feet booklet, flyers, brochures and posters and information on exercise interventions.

Barriers to falls prevention reported by respondents included time constraints, issues of patient compliance and motivation, staffing and skill levels and funding, availability of resources and falls prevention not seen as a priority in their LHD.

The most effective mechanism to reach respondents with falls prevention information and updates was through the email list as well as the e-newsletter and the website.

The information that respondents found most useful on the falls network website included: falls prevention resources section, research information such as SafetyLit, news on the front page of the website, information on events and courses and presentations available post event and the links to falls prevention flyers as well as the recorded webinars.

Most respondents (77%) indicated that the website provided sufficient information and resources and did not require any improvements. Suggested improvements included: patient handouts, update the website appearance and use icons, improve digital accessibility as well as adding a Q&A section, Stepping On section and specific sections for clinicians, carers and the public.

Most respondents (75%) had not attended the 2018 Falls Forum in Sydney mainly because they could not get time off work or funding to attend or it was too far to travel. Those that did attend indicated that the presentations informed their day to day practice. Suggestions of presentations that would be useful to their work area included; evidence into practice examples, research and exercise updates, practical session on exercise, strategies to use in the hospital setting and OT interventions and falls prevention interventions for those with cognitive impairment.

Over 95% of respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the following activities provided by the NSW Falls Prevention Network; Falls Links e-Newsletters, Falls Network website, communication on the email list, mini-reviews on pertinent topics related to falls prevention, Falls Network meetings and forums and webinars.

Over 90% of respondents indicated they would be interested in attending workshops on particular topics relevant to falls prevention with 79% indicating they would be willing to pay a reasonable cost to attend.

A range of topics were suggested for mini-reviews including some that have already been published on the website and in the e-newsletter highlighting the importance of circulating these mini-reviews more widely.

Respondents provided suggestions for resources and improvements to the website including; more webinars, research updates, Q&A section on the website, information on basic daily exercise

program components, biannual forums with rotation to rural locations, more practical translation of research into practice and a magnet with the five top tips for falls prevention.

An on-line survey response does have its limitations and many members may not access their emails or have on-line access to respond.

SURVEY SUMMARY

The majority of respondents worked in Allied Health (44%). Respondents' professional roles included:

- Physiotherapists [25.2%]
- Nursing (19.5%)
- Occupational Therapists (17.1%)
- Health Managers (7.7%)
- Health Promotion Practitioners (4.5%)
- Exercise Physiologists (1.6%)
- Researchers (2.9%).
- Physical Activity Providers (4.1%)
- Medical Practitioner (0.8%)
- Other (13.4%).

Other professional roles included Allied Health Assistants, Fitness trainer for Healthy Lifestyles, Diversional Therapist, Tai Chi Instructor, Hospital Nurse Educator, Podiatrist, development leader at R&D welfare and Fracture Liaison Coordinator.

The work settings of the respondents included:

- Public Hospital (47.0%)
- Private hospital (5.5%)
- Community Health (23.5%)
- Residential Aged Care (11.5%)
- Community Service Provider (8.00%)
- Subacute/Rehabilitation (8.0%)
- Health Promotion (7.0%)
- Private Practice (5.5%).
- Not for profit Organisation (5.5%)
- Local Health District Services (5.0%)
- Physical Activity Provider (4.0%)
- Research Institute/University (3.0%)
- Other (6.5%).

The other category included: Community Mental Health, MPS, Primary Health Network, State Government, For Profit- Corporate Office, Ageing in Place Facility, Stepping On Provider and NSW Ambulance.

Respondents work places included all Local Health Districts in NSW (total 83.3%), not for profit organisations and the private sector in NSW, as well as interstate (16.7% [ACT, QLD, VIC, SA, TAS, WA]) and overseas locations (Canada, Colombia, Europe, New Zealand and, Sweden).

Most respondents (81%) indicated they had current roles in falls prevention including:

- Direct clinical role with patients/clients (53.5%)
- Member of a falls committee (33.5%)
- Home assessments for patients/clients (22%)
- Exercise prescription (24.5%)
- Running exercise sessions (23.5%)
- Running falls prevention classes (e.g. Stepping On) (27.5%)
- Falls Champions in their work areas (22%)
- Patient safety and quality (16%)
- Coordinator that supported initiatives and strategies across a district (14.5%).
- Research (9.5%)
- Leading Better Value Care – Falls in Hospital Initiative (5.5%)
- Other (10.5%).

Other falls prevention activities included; Falls risk assessment and education for individual clients, Clinical Nurse Educator, Care Manager, Vision and falls prevention, supporting volunteers and exercise classes, App design, Ongoing monthly evaluation for patients and Staff, Leading Standard 10 within Hospital, Development of Health Promotion Initiatives.

The falls prevention resources that respondents would find useful to their practice included:

Table 1 Resources useful to falls prevention practice

Resource	% Respondents
Staying Active and on Your Feet Booklet	18
Flyers, brochures and posters	18
Exercise interventions	16.5
Evidence Based Practice examples	9.5
Websites (Falls Network & CEC)	6.5
Videos	2.5
Active and Healthy website	2
Charts and Displays	2
Hi-Lo Beds	2
Staff	2
Alarms, mats, rounding and declutter	1.5
Physiotherapy staff	1.5
Numerous resources	1.5
Fall Risk Assessment tools	1.5
Technology including Apps	1.5
Access to Stepping On	1.5

Other resources that respondents would find useful included: Guidelines and National Information, Fridge magnets, Mental Health Information, Patient Stories, Environment, fracture prevention nutrition and maternity information.

The barriers around falls prevention faced by respondents are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Barrier	% Respondents
Time constraints	15.5
Patient Compliance & motivation	15.5
Staffing levels	9.0
Funding	7.5
Staff skill levels	6.5
Resources	4.0
Patients with cognitive impairment	3.5
Not seen as Priority in LHD	3.5
Transport to classes	2.5
Environmental issues	2.5
Risk assessment	2.0
Lack of follow up and/or referral	2.0

Other issues and barriers around falls prevention included: staff lack of awareness, support for community staff, need for more translation of research to practice, access to Stepping On groups, rural issues, patient knowledge and education, dealing with confused patients and frail elderly, rural issues including lack of multidisciplinary staff

The usual way that 83% of respondents accessed the NSW Falls Prevention Network was through:

- E mail list (53.5%)
- E mail newsletter (22%)
- Website (21.5%)
- Other (2%)
- Facebook (0.5%)
- Twitter (0.5%)

Other ways included attending falls forums and forwarded information.

The website was found to be easy or very easy to navigate by over 95% of respondents.

The information that that respondents looked for on the website is summarised in Table 3

Table 3

Information on website	% respondents
Falls Prevention Resources	28.4
Research Information	21.9
News	16.6
Information on events and courses	15.9
Falls prevention flyers/handouts	11.8
Webinars	10.7
Presentation slides and recordings	8.3
Evidence Based practice resources	4.7
Guidelines	2.4
Physical activity information	1.8

Other information that respondents looked for on the website included strategies, statistics, assessments, community information, CALD resources, April Falls information and mini-reviews.

Respondents were asked about improvements to the NSW Falls Network website, 77% of respondents indicated none or no improvements were required and the website was very clear up to date and with good graphics. Suggestions to improve the website included:

- Having handouts for patients
- Simplify the text with icons
- Update the appearance of the website – more contemporary
- Increase the resources
- Specific Sections for Clinicians, Carers and the Public
- Community Awareness section
- Improve the linking
- Improve Digital accessibility
- Include faceted navigation
- Add Q & A section
- More research
- Stepping On section

The 2018 NSW Falls Prevention Network Forum was held in Sydney and attended by 25% of respondents, the remaining 75% were unable to attend for a variety of reasons including:

- Inability to get time off work (60%)
- No funding to attend the forum (47%)
- Too far to travel (30%)
- Not interested in topics at forum (3%)
- Does not count towards professional development (2.5%).

Further reasons included; family issues, not aware it as on, on leave, maternity leave, allowed other staff to attend, attended rural forum, had another workshop on the same day, seconded to another role at the time, fully booked when applied and watched the webcast on the day.

Those who attended were asked if the presentations informed their practice, 77% indicated they did. Those that indicated they were not useful provided the following comments:

- Plenary sessions were more client focused
- A lot of subjective presentations without evidence or strong research basis
- Similar content to previous year and irrelevant presentations (Climbing ladders, Uniting presentation)
- No new community information
- No new research findings to change current practice

The types of presentations that respondents would find useful for their work area are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4

Presentation suggestions	% respondents
Evidence into practice examples	7.9
Research update	5.0
Practical session on exercise	5.0
Strategies to use in acute hospital setting	5.0
Exercise update	4.3
OT Interventions	3.6
Interventions for cognitive impairment	2.9
Patient stories	2.9
Use of technology	2.1

Other suggestions for presentations at forums included: informal presentations, fracture prevention, frailty interventions, assessment for Aids, social marketing, vision and falls, consumer presentations, mobility for nurses, community programs, mental health and falls and changing culture and practice.

The Falls Network activities that the respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with included:

- Falls links Newsletters (98%)
- Falls Network website (98%)
- Communication on the email list/Listerv (97%)
- Mini-reviews on pertinent topics in falls prevention (96%)
- Falls Network Meetings/Forums (96%)
- Webinars (96%).
- April Falls Day activities (92%)
- DVD/USB resources (90%)

- Rural LHDs Falls Forums (89%)
- Facebook page (89%)

Suggestions for other activities or communication methods included: more could be put on Facebook page, funding and support for April Falls activities, community based projects and research webinars, onsite professional development presentations, better connection with residential aged care, you tube real time videos for patients and cannot access Facebook.

The most preferred methods for the communication of falls prevention information were:

- Emails through email list (25.3%)
- Webinars on selected topics (21.9%)
- Falls Forums in Sydney (21.6%)
- Email newsletter (14%)
- Rural Falls Forum (9.8%)
- Website (7.4%)
- Workshops on selected topics (7.1%)
- Twitter (3.9%)
- Facebook (0.7%)

Respondents were asked if they would like to attend specific workshops covering topics such as exercise, dementia and falls, medications and falls, interventions in acute areas/community/residential aged care and 92% indicated they would like to attend these types of workshops.

104 Respondents commented on the topics they would like covered in workshops these are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5

Topic for Workshop	% respondents
Dementia and falls prevention	9.6
Exercise and falls prevention	8.7
Medications and falls	7.7
Interventions in acute care	6.7
Interventions in aged care	5.8
Interventions in Community	4.8
Exercise in acute care	2.9
Dizziness and falls	2.9
Social media and marketing	1.9
Exercise in aged care	1.9

Other suggestions for workshop topics included falls prevention education for patients/clients, falls prevention in chronic diseases, arthritis and falls, osteoporosis and falls, sarcopaenia, vision and falls, neuromuscular disorders and falls prevention and podiatry interventions.

79% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay for these workshops as long as they were provided at a reasonable cost, those that indicated they would not pay commented that there was no funding to attend courses and that it depended on whether they would be able to take leave to attend, a few commented that webinars would be better.

Respondents provided suggestions for mini-reviews and 85 respondents provided a suggestion and these are summarised in Table 6

Table 6

Mini review topic	% Respondents
Nutrition and falls	5.9
Cognitive impairment and falls	4.7
Medications and falls	4.7
Falls prevention equipment and resources	4.7
Vision and falls	4.7
Dizziness and falls	3.5
Specific balance exercises for home programs	2.4
Chronic diseases and falls prevention	2.4
Dementia, delirium and falls in acute care	2.4
Tai Chi for falls prevention	2.4

A mini-review on nutrition and falls was completed in 2016 as well as vision and falls in 2017, this highlights the importance of circulating information on these reviews beyond the e-newsletter

Other suggestions for mini-reviews included: mental health and falls prevention, sarcopaenia, impact of water based exercise on balance, yoga for falls prevention, recommended physical activity programs, maintaining client motivation, use of 4 wheeled walkers and falls, mechanism of falls in chronic diseases (diabetes, stroke, Parkinson's Disease) and intuitive care on the reduction of falls.

Respondents provided suggestions on information and resources around falls prevention they would find helpful and other suggestions to improve the NSW Falls Prevention Network and its activities, there were 75 responses and these are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7

Suggestions for resources and improvements	% respondents
More webinars	5.3
Research updates	2.7
Q&A Section on website	2.7
Daily basic exercise program components	2.7
Information on long term use of psychiatric medications	2.7
Make April Falls Merchandise available earlier	2.7
Biannual Forums with rural venues	2.7
Practical translation of research into practice	2.7

Magnet with top 5 falls prevention tips	2.7
Success stories from rural projects	1.3
Innovations section on website	1.3
Exercise frequency, intensity and progression information	1.3

Other suggestions included: falls prevention calendar with monthly topic updates, falls prevention in mental health, drug and alcohol, information pack for aged care, basic facts and graphs to share with clients, design and redesign of health and aged care facilities, links to senior's week and other community events, video with information for consumers/patients

A selection of overall comments on the Falls Network and its activities and resources are listed in the box below.

'The webinars have been absolutely fantastic!'
'Use the resources frequently, they are comprehensive, evidence based practice, multidisciplinary, concise and clear'
'You are doing an important job and I appreciate that you generously share presentations and knowledge'
'Quality in information presented in all forms is extremely high and speed of response has been wonderful'
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In conclusion, the majority of respondents were very satisfied with the activities and information provided by the NSW Falls Prevention Network and would like to see the continued provision of these activities and updates of information. The suggestions provided by respondents will be incorporated into the ongoing update of the NSW Falls Network website and activities of the network.