Physical Medicine-2013
OMICS Group Conferences
Accelerating Scientific Discovery
International Conference and Exhibition on
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
August 19-21, 2013 Embassy Suites Las Vegas, USA

The use of the short physical performance battery in long term care in determining lower extremity function

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Abstract

Background: The Short Physical Performance Battery has been identified as a valid and reliable tool to evaluate the function of the lower extremity for community dwelling older adults. However, it has not been utilized in the long term care.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB) in evaluating lower extremity function in older adults in long term care. The results would assist in identifying those individuals who are at risk for frailty.

Methods: This study included 46 men and women between the ages of 59 -106 who were conveniently chosen from a long term care facility in Washington, DC. The participants were tested using the SPPB. The statistical analysis was done using the SPSS 20**.** The Pearson Product Coefficient was used to determine the level of relationship between the variables and the level of significance used was .05.

Results: There results were based on 22 ambulatory subjects. There was an excellent relationship between the balance score ($r=.925$, $\alpha=.01$) with the total score and the gait speed ($r=.842$,$\alpha=.01$) with the total score.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that utilizing the SPPB test in LTC setting may be effective in assessing the lower extremity functional performance of older adults. However there may be some specific aspects of lower extremity function that may be overlooked and not identified by the SPPB test in this setting. The SPPB total score seems to be more accurate in assessing institutionalized older adults than the SPPB categories.

Key words: Older adult, long term care, Short Physical Performance Battery

Biography

Carole Campbell Burnett, PT, DSc, Ed.M, is an Associate Professor in the College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences in the Department of Physical Therapy at Howard University for. Dr. Burnett has served on the faculties of Northeastern University, the University of Maryland Baltimore and Eastern Shore and Central Buganda University in Uganda, East Africa. Burnett has also served as a member of the District of Columbia Licensure Board of Physical Therapy. She has presented at numerous national and international conferences.

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