

Introducing a community facing falls multidisciplinary team case review meeting (Falls MDT) – a service review

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Introduction

- World guidelines for falls prevention advocate opportunistic case finding and multidomain interventions tailored to individual's fall risk factors ⁷.
- Review of the literature found 30-40% of people over the age of 65 years and 50% of people aged over 80 years will fall at least once every year. Of those that fall, 5-10% of people sustain fractures or traumatic brain injuries. 25% of older people will die in the first year following a hip fracture, 76% will have a decline in their mobility, 50% will have a decline in their ability to perform ADL's and 22% will move into a care home as a result ¹.
- In New Zealand there are approximately 30 falls in the community for every one fall in hospital ². We instituted a falls multidisciplinary team (Falls MDT) including community physiotherapists, nurse specialists, pharmacist, occupational therapist and geriatrician for people identified at risk of falling, to discuss and individualise ongoing management to reduce falls risk.

Aim

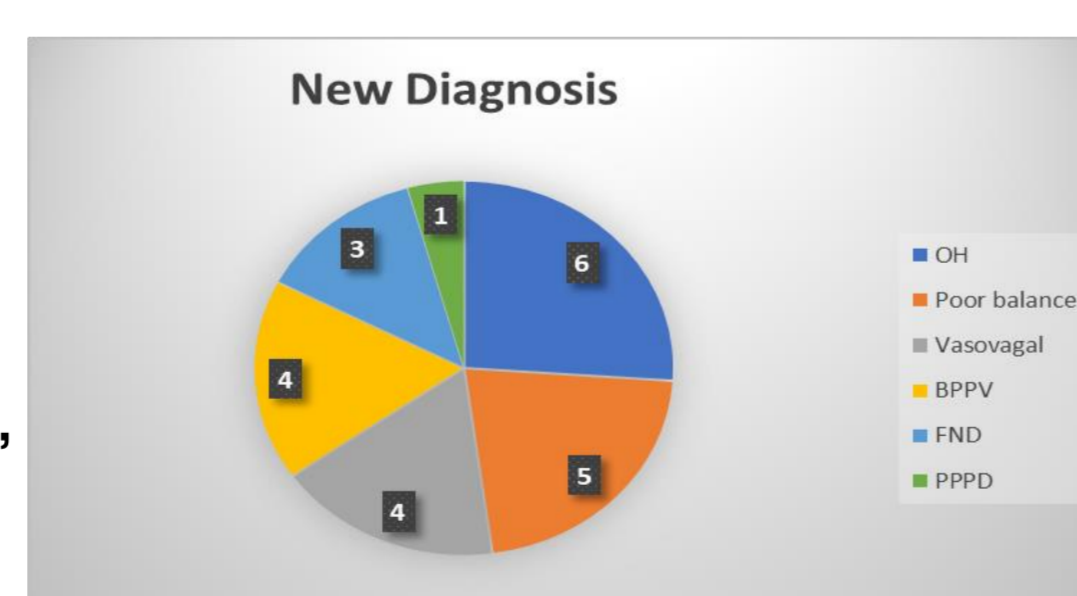
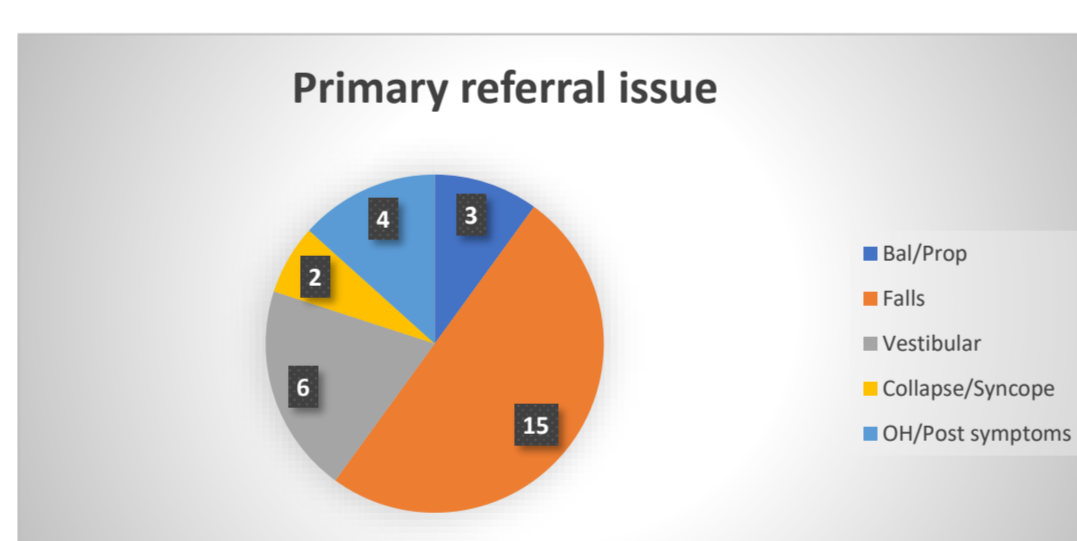
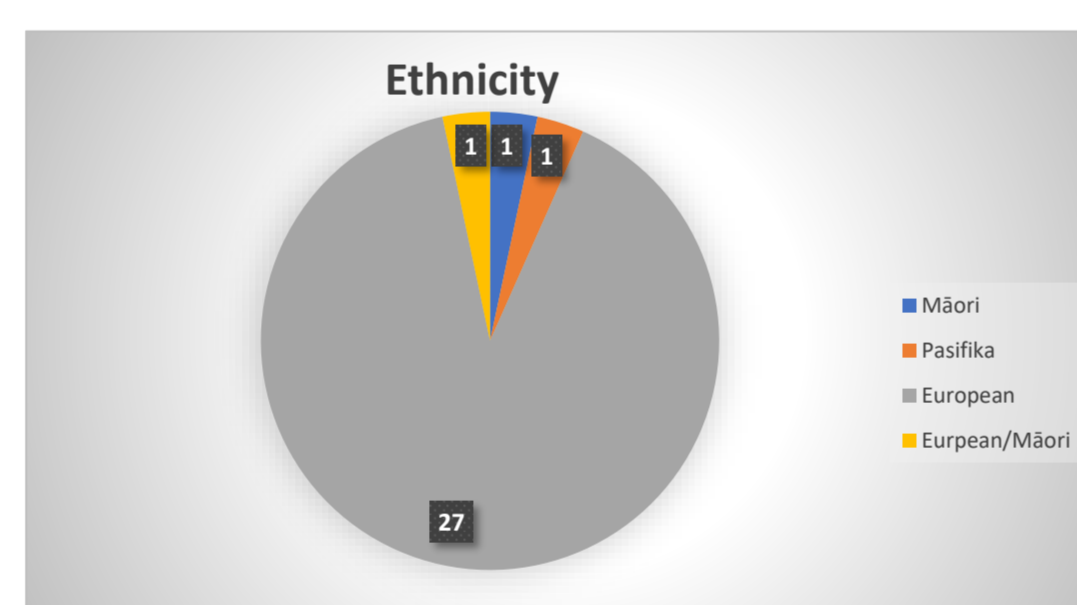
- Evaluate impact of Falls MDT on new diagnoses, referrals and service use.

Method

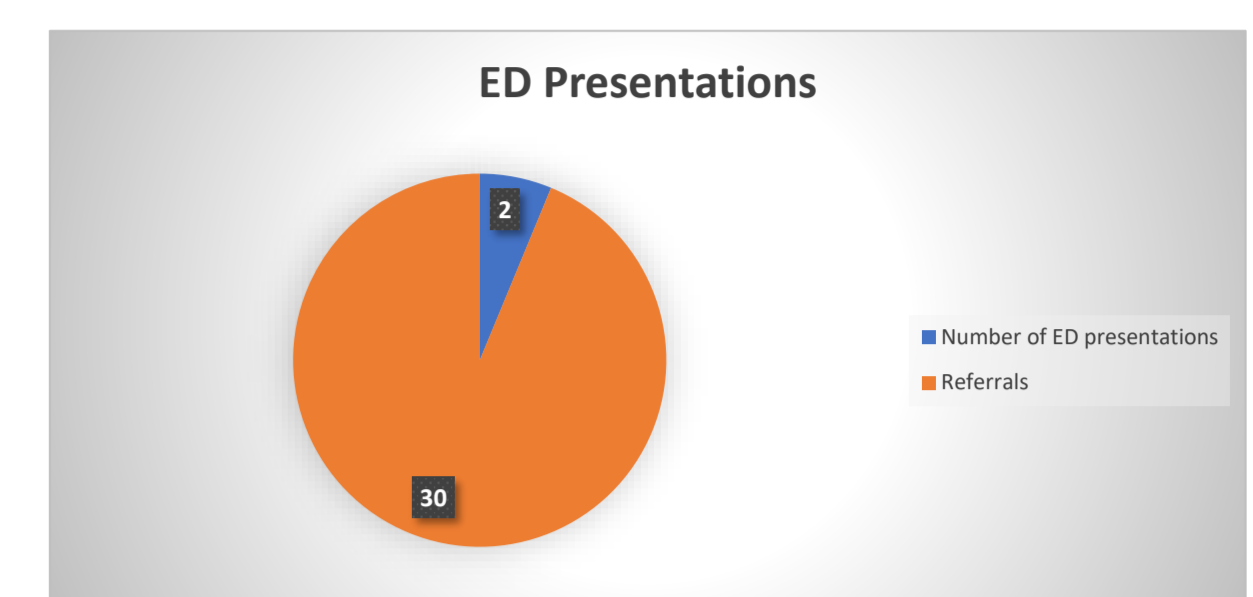
- Review of Falls MDT cases July 2022 to April 2023. Demographic, diagnostic and outcome data sourced from referral spreadsheet, electronic records and clinical letters.

Results

- 30 patients were referred to Falls MDT. Median age was 80 years with a standard deviation of 8.2 years. Gender was similar in numbers female n=16 and male n=14.
- The predominant ethnicity was European with only 2 people identifying as Māori. In Hawkes Bay, there are an estimated 166000 people, with 18% 65 years and over ⁵. and an estimated 3300 (10%) people identifying as Māori 65 years and over ⁶. Māori were underrepresented in this cohort with 6.6% referred within the cohort.
- The primary issue on the referral was falls in 50% of cases, which reflects the literature whereby falls are a leading cause of referral to falls clinics ³.
- Other primary issues included vestibular 20%, orthostatic hypotension (OH)/postural symptoms 13%, balance/proprioception 10% and collapse/syncope 7%.
- Secondary factors on referral included balance/proprioception n=4, vestibular symptoms n=4 and cognition n=4 as the main secondary factors, followed by OH n=2, postural symptoms n=2, falls n=1, polypharmacy n=1 and cardiac n=1.
- New diagnosis included OH n=6 (26%), balance impairment n=5 (22%), vasovagal syncope n=4 (17%), benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) n=4, (17%), functional neurology n=4, (17%), persistent postural perceptual dizziness (PPPD) n=1, (4%).
- Orthostatic hypotension is a significant factor for falls in the older persons population ⁸. The predominant primary issue for referral was falls, which reflects the literature suggesting falls are a leading cause of referral to falls clinics ³. Orthostatic hypotension was the predominant final diagnosis from this review.

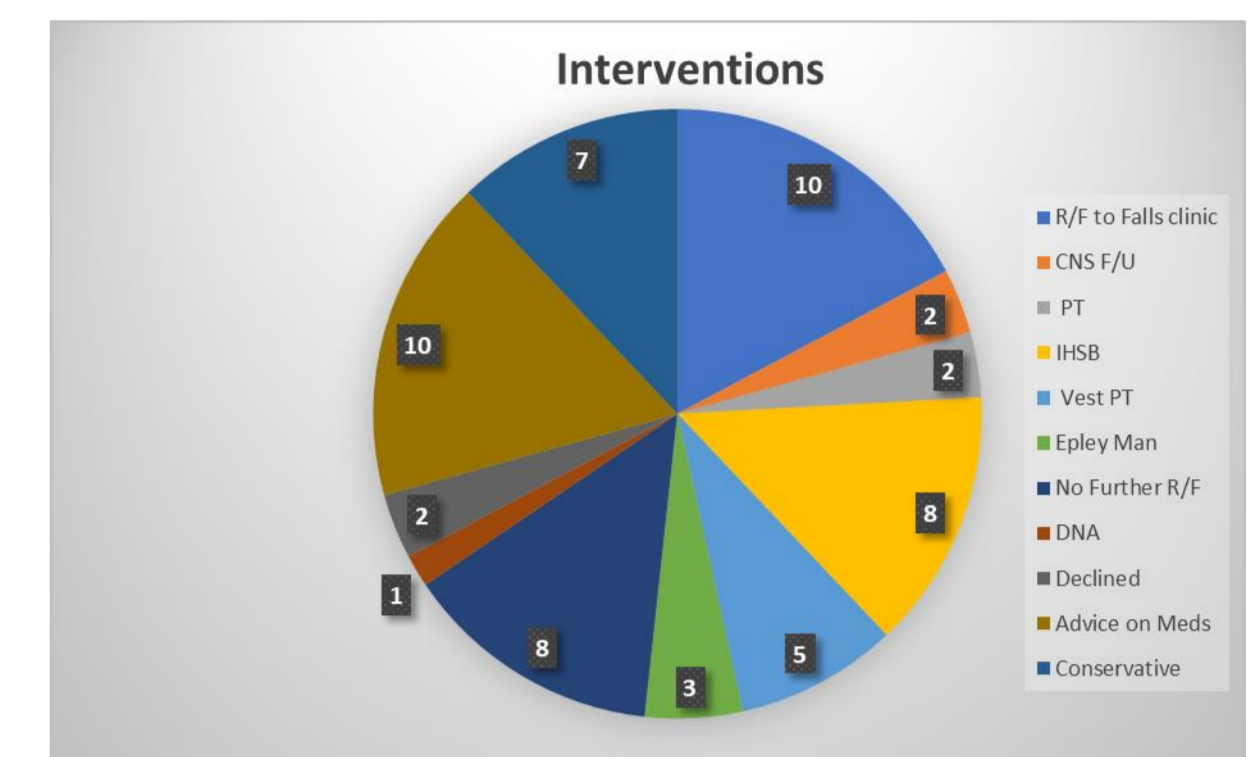


- Only 2 (7%) patients re-attended emergency care in 10 months following Falls MDT starting.



Interventions included

- Refer to falls clinic n=10.
- Clinical nurse specialist follow up n=2.
- Referral to community physiotherapy n=2.
- Referral for strengthening and balance n=8.
- Referral to vestibular physiotherapy n=5.
- *Epley manoeuvre n=3, no further referral n=8.
- DNA n=1, declined further input n=2.
- *Medications stopped/advice to GP on medications n=10.
- *Conservative advice/postural changes/water intake/counter pressure measures n=7.
- Note - Those interventions with an * were provided in the fall's clinic and by the CNS.
- Literature suggests that clinicians should select appropriate multifactorial interventions to reduce falls and subsequent risk of falls. These should be patient specific and may include addressing medication, vision, cognition and environment as an example ⁴.



Recommendations

- Continuation of the Falls MDT.
- Improve and promote referral pathway and criteria to wider health services
- Promote Falls service to Māori health providers.
- Accessible Falls clinic in Wairoa/Central Hawkes Bay communities.
- A dedicated Allied health resource be provided from within community teams.

References

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Acknowledgements

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