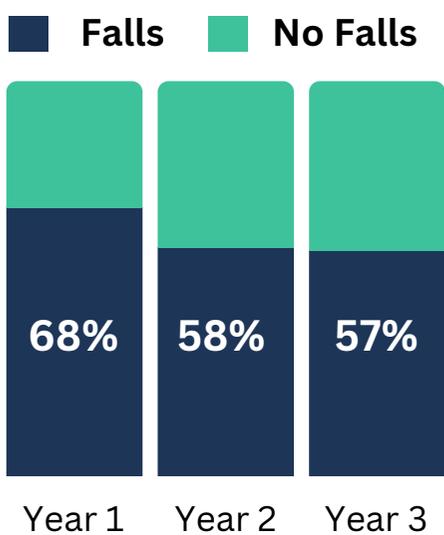


Falls over Time in People Aging with Long-Term Physical Disability

Falls pose a serious threat to health and independence, but they are preventable. Most fall prevention research and programs focus on older adults, but people who are aging (ages 45-64) with disabilities are also at high risk for falls and their consequences. Community-based organizations need more information to support fall prevention programming for this population.

We collected information on health, participation and falls in a longitudinal cohort study of people aging with long-term physical disabilities. Participants filled out a survey on health, participation and falls every year for three years.

What We Found



There were 323 participants in the study. Every year, more than half of participants reported falling.

Each year, participants who fell had higher levels of pain, fatigue and depression than those who didn't fall.

This was also true for participants who fell in all three years: those who fell every year had higher levels of pain, fatigue and depression than those who didn't.

Notably, the **severity of fall outcomes** changed significantly over three years, with the greatest change occurring after the first fall.

Next Steps

These findings lay a foundation for future falls research and programming. Further research on falls in people aging with long-term disability is needed in order to:

- Learn about the frequency of falls and fall patterns over time
- Identify specific fall risk factors
- Develop evidence-based fall prevention interventions

This information can help community-based organizations deliver timely, appropriate, evidence-based interventions that can help people aging with long-term disabilities continue to live and participate in their communities.