

Improvement in Usual Gait Speed Predicts 36% Better Survival in Seniors

HomeCare Elite
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Susan Hardy, MD and colleagues recruited 439 adults age 65 and older to assess multiple possible predictors of mortality that could be used in primary care. Their results were published recently in the *Journal of the American Geriatric Society* (*Improvement in usual gait speed predicts better survival in older adults*, 2007; 55 (11): 1727-1734.). Seniors who experienced no improvement in habitual gait speed during the 12 months studied experienced a 49.3% mortality rate over the next eight years. Seniors who showed only a 0.1 meter per second improvement in gait speed after one year experienced a much improved mortality rate of 31.6%. Seniors who showed a gain during quarterly assessments but lost those gains by the end of the year also trended toward improved mortality over the next eight years. Hardy et al state that their findings support the recommendations that primary care practitioners should assess gait speed as part of annual geriatric exams. Hardy et al also suggest that these findings may underscore the importance of prescribing interventions that affect habitual gait speed.

The Timed-Up-and-Go-Test serves as an accepted way to evaluate gait speed and fall risk among patients age 65 and over. **When your patients' gait speed suggests that they have not fully recovered from a recent injury or illness or when your patients' gait suggests a high risk of future falls, please consider a referral to Generation Solutions home health.** For your homebound patients, our falls prevention / gait training program will deliver physical therapy, occupational therapy, home nursing, and medical equipment specialists that can improve gait and home safety in a number of ways.

When your homebound patients are having trouble with gait, please tell them about the home health services of
Generation Solutions

Medicare Certified Home Health • Comprehensive Private Duty Homecare • Home Medical Equipment

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