Symptoms Of Dizziness, Presyncope, and Syncope Are Not Associated With Falls Or Systolic Blood Pressure Drop Among Older Individuals With Recurrent And Injurious Falls

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SYMPTOMS OF DIZZINESS, PRESYNCOPE AND SYNCOPE ARE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH FALLS OR SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE DROP AMONG OLDER INDIVIDUALS WITH RECURRENT AND INJURIOUS FALLS

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Aims To determine whether the symptoms of dizziness, presyncope and syncope are associated with changes in postural blood pressure among older fallers.

Methods This was a cross-sectional study involving cases aged 65 years old with 2 or more falls or one injurious fall in the previous 12 months and controls aged 65 years old with no falls in the preceding year recruited via word-of-mouth and media advertising. Postural blood pressure changes were assessed with non-invasive continuous blood pressure monitoring (Taskforce, CNSystems, Austria), during 10 minutes, of supine rest and 3 minutes of standing.

Results Beat-to-beat blood pressure data was available for 117 fallers and 89 non-fallers, mean (SD) age= 75(7), 69% women. There was no significant difference in self-reported symptoms of dizziness, presyncope and syncope between cases and controls. Fallers had significantly larger drop in SBP (28 ± 14 vs. 19 ± 9 mmHg; p<0.001) with standing. An SBP drop of 30mmHg was strongly associated with recurrent and injurious falls (odds ratio (95%confidence interval)= 7.61(3.18-18.21)). There was no significant difference in DBP change with standing among fallers and non-fallers. The changes in SBP remained significant after adjustment for symptoms of dizziness, presyncope and syncope.

Conclusion Self-reported symptoms of dizziness, pre-syncope and syncope were not associated with falls and did not predict the greater reduction in systolic blood pressure changes associated with falls. Our results question the current practice of deducing the likelihood of hypotensive episodes through historical features among older fallers, and highlights the fact that older fallers with postural hypotension may not experience any symptoms.