Community Fall Expo: Promoting Health and Preventing Falls

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Community Fall Expo: Promoting Health and Preventing Falls
Division of Trauma
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Background:
- Falls are no accident
- Every 35 minutes an older adult dies from a fall
- Falls can be prevented through:
  - Education
  - Community Outreach
  - Awareness
- Falls are the leading cause for injury and death among older adults (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Falls are the most common cause of non-fatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma
- More than one third of people 65 and older fall each year in the U.S.
- Falls occur:
  - At home
  - In public places
- In health care facilities
  - Anywhere

Fall Facts:
- 60% of fatal falls occur in the home according to the CDC
- $30 billion are spent annually on health care related to falls. Medicare costs alone for hip fractures is a result of falls is projected to be $240 billion dollars by 2040
- Many people that fall even if there is no injury develop a fear of falling; this often leads to a limit in activity which in turn leads to decline in mobility, thereby increasing the risk of falling
- People that fall are 2 to 3 times more likely to fall again
- 53% of older adults who are discharged for fall related hip fractures will experience another fall in 6 months
- Almost half of the people who enter nursing homes do so because of a fall. After the fall, they cannot stay at home on their own.
- In 2008 61% of bankruptcy filings were in the age group of 65 and over who had to deal with medical expenses for health issues directly linked to a fall

LVHN Fall Statistics:
- Falls are the number one trauma mechanism for people 55 and older
- In 2010 the total patients 55 and older that were admitted after being seen by the Emergency Department and our trauma physicians was 1669
- Of the 1669, 197 (11.8%) were seen for motor vehicle accidents, 1147 (68.7%) for falls
- Average length of stay for patients admitted due to falls was 5.3 days and there was 5.8% mortality for falls

Safe Steppin – A Starting Point:
- Fall Prevention program created in 2004 utilized as a fall prevention outreach to the community
- Goals:
  - Get regular health screens and follow-up care to improve their health and decrease the risk of falling.
  - Educate people on hazards inside and outside the home and provide economic ways to modify their environment to make it safer, thereby decreasing the risk of falls.
  - Encourage people to exercise regularly.
  - Educate community on risk factors for falling.
  - Make people aware of the complications that can occur from various disease processes.
  - Provide information on how medications can effect falling, including the dangers of blood thinners related to falls.
  - Stress the importance of regular vision and hearing screens.

Community Fall Expo – The New Program:
- Provide an interdisciplinary approach to develop effective community education for the promotion of health and the prevention of falls
- Money was provided by the LVHN Trauma Service
- September 19, 2011 at the LVHN-Muhlenberg campus
  - Free flu shots and lunch provided
  - Numerous health screens offered
  - 24 vendors
  - ‘Passport’
  - Facilitate interaction and learning by the participants
  - Encouraged to visit at least 10 vendors to be eligible for prizes

Results:
- Plan to offer the Wellness Expo annually

Future plans/lessons learned:
- Provide education starting earlier with the 50+ age group to promote good health, decrease complications related to disease processes and prevent falls
- Provide free flu shots, health screenings, and educational presentations
- Plan to offer the Wellness Expo annually

Sources:
1. LVHN
2. Home Safety Council
3. LVHN Trauma Registry

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