

## **Frequency and circumstances of falls in people with Inclusion Body Myositis in the United Kingdom**

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The aim of this study was to ascertain the incidence and circumstances of falls/near falls for people with inclusion body myositis (IBM) within the United Kingdom. Provision of physiotherapy to this population was also investigated.

IBM is the most common muscle disease diagnosed in people over 50. Clinical reporting suggests falls are a more frequent occurrence than would be expected in an age-matched healthy population. To date no research has looked specifically at the causes of falls and related therapy intervention in IBM.

72 people (mean age 67.8 years  $\pm$  8.3, 65% male) with confirmed IBM were identified from clinic lists and through patient organisations.

Data was collected by postal questionnaire. Response rate was 86%.

Primary analysis was examination of questionnaires returned. The proportion of participants who fell, nearly fell and who fell frequently was calculated. A descriptive analysis detailing the circumstances of the falls/near falls was performed. Further analysis explored the provision of physiotherapy.

Despite 98.4% of respondents having fallen, only 18% had received any form of therapy or education relating to falls. Falls and near falls occur during a variety of activities and are attributed to a number of causes. Actual falls occur more frequently than near falls. Referral to physiotherapy is often delayed or lacking – 26.5% of referrals being made over one year after diagnosis and 21% of respondents never having been referred.

This study has shown falls are a common multi-factorial occurrence for people with IBM. Despite presenting with several risk factors for falling, a significant proportion of the population have never been offered physiotherapy or entered into falls prevention programmes. Future research into the impact of muscle weakness in IBM on gait, balance and falls, as well as research into long term benefits of attending a structured falls programme, would help to develop standard care guidelines for physiotherapy management of mobility, function and falls in IBM.

Inclusion Body Myositis, Falls, Physiotherapy

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