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# Learnings on drowning prevention from the healthy ageing sector

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NATIONAL DROWNING PREVENTION SUMMIT 2014

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# Falls in older people

- Around 1 in 3 of community dwelling older people > 65 years fall every year
- 50% of falls at home, mostly slips/trips in commonly used rooms eg kitchen, bedroom
- 50% other peoples houses, public places
  - Uneven, slippery surfaces common eg gutters, construction sites

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# Risk factors for falls in older people

- Older age, low weight, female gender
- Co-morbidities
- Multiple medications
- Poor vision
- Reduced muscle strength
- History of falling
- Gait disorders, alcohol abuse



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# Effective interventions

- Many trials of preventive programs
- Effective programs include:
  - Group and home-based exercise programmes, Tai Chi
  - Home safety interventions
  - Multifactorial assessment and intervention programmes

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# Drowning in older people

- Risk factors similar to fall injury
  - Age
  - Frailty
  - Less aware of increasing physical limitations
  - Alcohol
  - Environment

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# A systems approaches to prevention

- Environmental factors
- Engineering
- Legislation/policy and enforcement
- Behavioural/personal risk factors
- Educational approaches

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# Prevention of drowning

- Environmental factors/Engineering
- Legislation/policy and enforcement
  - Alcohol (drink driving and boating)
  - Supervision of bathing (residential care)
- Behavioural/personal risk factor
  - Falls programs eg strength and balance training
- Educational approaches

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