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Economic Dimensions of Slip and Fall Injuries

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Abstract

This paper provides an update of annual economic costs imposed by fall injuries. Such costs include medical, rehabilitation, hospital costs, and the costs of morbidity and mortality. These costs are projected to the year 2020, based on changing demographic trends.

The market for slip and fall injury prevention is analyzed for the elderly and for those in the workplace—two high risk groups. Questions as to whether this market operates in a socially desirable manner, or whether government intervention is justified on efficiency grounds, are considered.

Essential aspects of cost-benefit analysis are reviewed in the context of a prospective evaluation of interventions to prevent slip and fall injuries. The cost-benefit analysis framework is applied to part of the FICSIT experiment (a major intervention to reduce falls among the elderly) and to recent revisions in Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations directed at reducing workplace falls.

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