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## Healthy aging and self- management: Visual ability as a risk factor of falling among independently living seniors – What methods are to be used?

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Injuries among seniors such as fall injuries are one major problem today even though various actions are taken in promoting healthy ageing and self-management. However age is one of the most important independent fall predictors since the body does change with age. A decline of visual ability is one of the natural changes and it is known that affected visual ability is one of the most predictive risk factor of falling both independently and in combination with other risk factors. In a population of independently living seniors 70 years and older (n=212) 43%, 36 men and 55 women, reported at least one fall. Both perceived and performance-based visual ability and its association to falls were investigated. The National Eye Institute Visual Function Questionnaire (NEI VFQ-25) was used assessing various dimensions of self-reported vision functioning in daily life activities such as going down steps or curbs, and difficulties in noticing objects off to the side while walking along. Significant associations with falling ( $p < 5\%$ ) were found for nine out of eleven NEI VFQ- 25 vision-related subscales for men, but none for women. However regarding performance-based visual ability such as visual acuity, contrast sensitivity, stereopsis and visual field no associations were found with falls ( $p < 5\%$ ). The majority of the seniors presented normal performance- based visual ability even though falls were common. One reason may be that at an eye clinic the conditions are optimal and standardized and do not agree with the conditions in the seniors' daily life where difficulties may occur. The results shows that when planning fall prevention actions it is of importance investigating seniors' perceived visual ability when performing various daily life activities.

### Biography

Jeanette Kallstrand Eriksson is a RN and ophthalmic nurse. She is also a PhD in Medical Science with a specialization in Healthcare Sciences and works as a senior lecturer at the School of Health and Welfare at Halmstad University in Sweden.

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