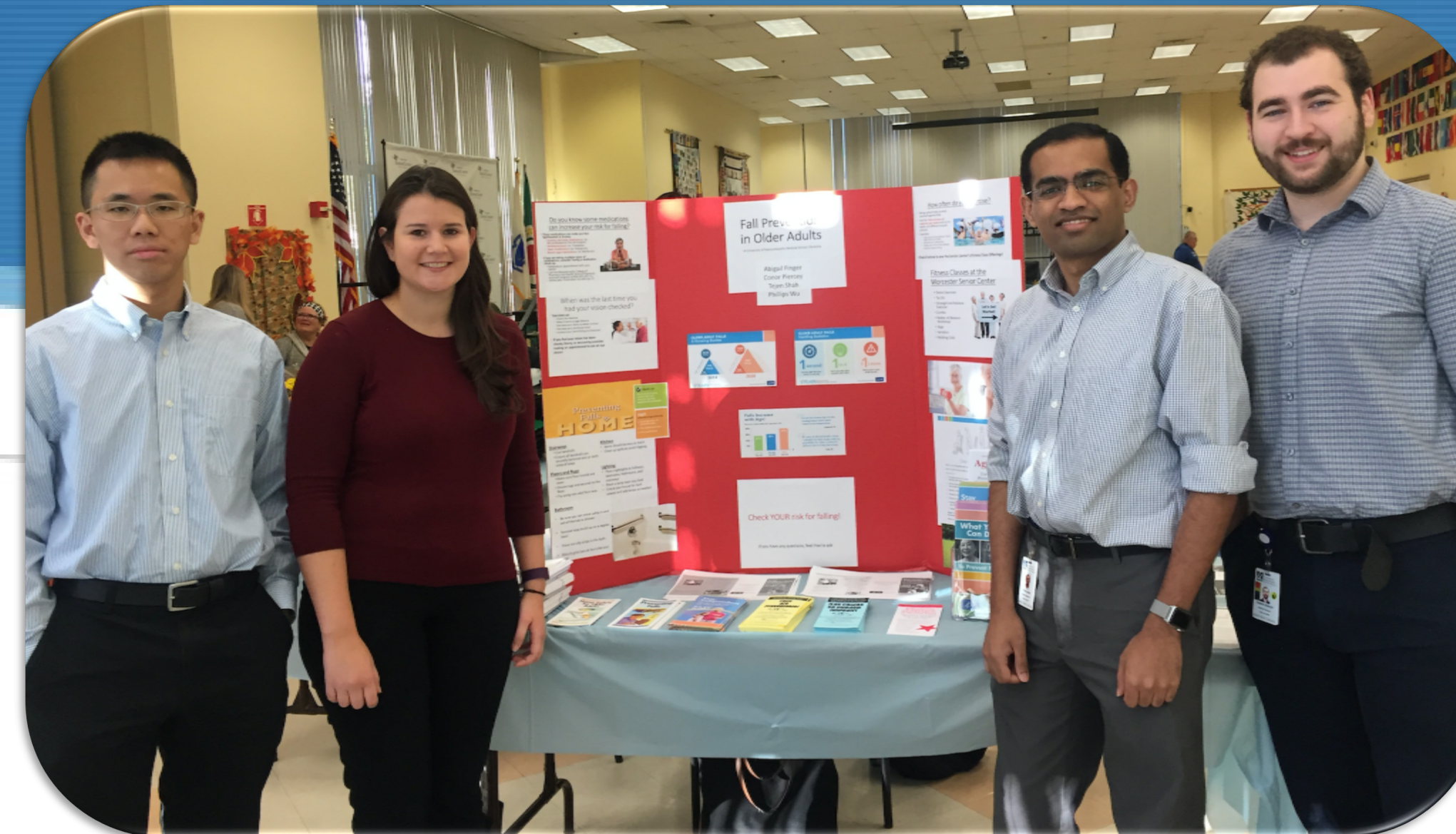


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Introduction

- Every year 2.8 million older people visit the ER due to a fall injury.
- 1/5 falls cause serious injuries like hip fracture and brain injury.
- In MA, falls are the leading cause of traumatic brain injury and 80% of fall-related fatalities are in patients 65 years and older.
- 12% of the population of Worcester are seniors and ~35% of those seniors live alone, which increases their risk for falls.
- In 2010, due to the increasing issue of falls in elders, legislation was passed creating the Massachusetts commission on fall prevention. Its goals include:
 1. Making widely available fall prevention activities and programs, e.g. Chronic Disease Self Management.
 2. Improve healthcare provider education and understanding of the importance of performing fall risk assessments.
 3. Expand public education on healthy aging.



Service Project

Goal: To provide information about fall risk and prevention to the elder population, perform fall risk assessments, and encourage seniors to discuss fall prevention with their physicians.

Worcester Senior Center Health Fair

- Provided information about overall fall risks, medications that can increase fall risk, ways to make homes safer, and strengthening exercises that can help to prevent falls
- Using the STEADI Falls Risk Checklist, assessed fall risk in seniors by conducting three measures of gait, strength, and balance:
 1. The Timed Up and Go Test (TUG) - measures the time it takes for the participant to stand up from a chair, walk 10 feet, and return to the chair
 2. The 30 Second Chair Stand Test – measures the number of times a participant can stand up from a chair in 30 seconds without using their hands
 3. The 4-Stage Balance Test – measures participant balance for 10 seconds in 4 progressively more challenging positions
- Encouraged seniors to bring the completed checklist to their physicians to discuss fall risk and prevention and to participate in programs at the Senior Center aimed at increasing strength and balance

Discussion

Cost Burden of Fall

- Projected cost of falls nationwide by 2020 expected to reach up to 54.9 billion
- 10,000 people turn 65 in the U.S. everyday and the average U.S. life expectancy continues to rise
- In 2014 alone, 46 million older adults fell. By 2030, 74 million older adults are projected to fall annually

Risk Factors for Falls

- Lower extremity weakness
- Vitamin D Deficiency
- Certain Medications (Loop Diuretics, Sedatives, Beta Blockers, Anti-Depressants)
- Foot problems
- Vision Problems
- Environmental Hazards
- Other health issues such as Stroke, Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, Incontinence

Recommendations:

- Review medication and fall risks with your physicians
- Participate in evidence based exercises (Matter of Balance and Tai Chi)
- Schedule a home safety assessment
- Explore community resources available through ESWA and the Worcester Senior Center.

References

- STEADI Risk Factors for Falls, cdc.gov/steadi
- <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/adultfalls.html>
- <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/community-health/dvip/injury-prevention/falls.html>
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Interprofessional Network

