Exercise programs reduce falls in older people living in the community

Clinical Question	How effective are exercise programs in preventing falls in older people (aged 60+ years) living in the community?
Bottom Line	Well-designed exercise programs reduced the rate of falls and the number of people experiencing falls amongst older people living in the community (high-certainty evidence). Exercise reduced the number of people experiencing one or more fall-related fractures and the number of people experiencing one or more falls requiring medical attention (low-certainty evidence). There was uncertainty about the effect of exercise programs on the number of people who experienced one or more falls requiring hospital admission. Exercise made little important difference to health-related quality of life (low-certainty evidence). Exercise programs that reduced falls primarily involved balance and functional exercises, while programs that probably reduced falls include multiple exercise categories (typically balance and functional exercises plus resistance exercises). Tai Chi also prevented falls but there was uncertainty about the effect of resistance exercise, dance, or walking on the rate of falls. Exercise programs were effective regardless of whether they were delivered individually or in groups, by health professionals or trained non-health professionals, to younger or older populations (based on a 75 year age threshold) or to those identified at a higher risk of falls or not selected for risk of falls.
Caveat	The reporting of adverse events was poor; where reported these were usually non-serious and predominantly musculoskeletal.
Context	At least one-third of community-dwelling people over 65 years of age fall each year. Exercises that target balance, gait and muscle strength have previously been found to prevent falls in these people
Cochrane Systematic Review	Sherrington C et al. Exercise for preventing falls in older people living in the community. Cochrane Reviews, 2019, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD012424.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD012424.pub2. This review contains 108 studies involving 23,407 participants in 25 countries.

Pearls No. 625, September 2019, written by Brian R McAvoy.C5

Systematic review link:
https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD012424.pub2/full