Falling wrinklies

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Papers on the elderly are just as welcome as those on children and adolescents

In this issue, and again in the following one, we will include papers addressing one of the main injury problems of the elderly, falls. As a card-carrying “wrinkly” (the name our children disrespectfully use to address their aging parents), I fully understand the need for this emphasis. A few weeks ago I chased after a hat that had blown off my head and fell from a deck landing on my back. I emerged in pain but otherwise unscathed. At the Melbourne World Conference I arrived with a fractured clavicle after falling down the stairs at Sydney airport (actually, I was pushed). At another injury conference I came on crutches after having damaged a heel. I had fallen off a ladder that I had foolishly placed on a chair on a table to help me reach a bird feeder! (I was assured that this was not as stupid as it sounds because it was well known that “time wounds all heels”.) These are

among my leading qualifications for being the editor of this journal. I know all about injuries but evidently I know considerably less about their prevention.

On a more serious note, papers on this topic and others involving the elderly help balance the journal’s previous exclusive emphasis on children and adolescents. This emphasis was largely a legacy of our origins as the official journal of the International Society of Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention (ISCAIP). The transition from a child focused journal to an “all age” publication did not occur as rapidly as I anticipated, but we now reflect the age spectrum of injuries far better. For example, in the August issue, of the 10 original articles and brief reports, three are child focused. In this, the October issue, the proportion will be about the same.

As for falls in the elderly, apart from several papers under review, this issue

includes the exceptionally important contribution by Stevens, Corso, Finkelstein, and Miller¹ highlighting the enormous cost these injuries entail (*see page 290*). Although the findings rely on US data, it is difficult to imagine that they would not be proportionately similar anywhere on the globe.

As well, La Grow *et al*² provide a fascinating insight into a successful program for reducing falls among the elderly with visual impairment. (*see page 296*)

In light of the findings Stevens *et al* report, readers can expect to find an increasing number of papers dealing with falls in all age groups because falls are a leading cause of morbidity. And, more reports will be printed addressing the many other injuries that disproportionately affect older adults, wrinkled or not.

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- 2 La Grow SJ, Robertson MC, Campbell AJ, *et al*. Reducing hazard related falls in people 75 years and older with significant visual impairment: how did a successful program work? *Injury Prevention* 2006;12:296–301.