Falls and Feet

Falls risk and feet

• Older people with a history of multiple falls have greater foot impairments than non or only fallers

• Cumulative effect of multiple foot problems

Menz 2001
Foot Problems

- Painful feet including painful corns, arthritis
- bunions
- gout
- swollen ankles / feet
- toe deformities (hammer, mallet and claw toes)
- fallen arches

Foot Pain and Falls

- Fallers had higher plantar pressures than non fallers
- People with foot pain had higher plantar pressures

Do higher plantar pressures in gait contribute to foot pain and increased risk of falls?

Mickle 2010
Footwear

• Desirable characteristics:
  – Shoes with fastening mechanism (laces / velcro etc)
  – Shoes with thin, hard soles
  – High shoe collar (boots)
  – Slip resistant soles and good tread on soles
  – Low or no heels
  – Posterior (back) bevel on heel

Shoes that are too small can result in foot pain and deformity

Management of Foot Pain to ↓ Falls

• Foot exercises and orthotics for those with foot pain: significant decrease in falls

• Intervention
  – Foot orthoses
  – Footwear advice and provision
  – Home based foot and ankle exercise programme
  – Falls prevention education

Spink et al, 2011