

Detection of multidimensional frailty in community dwelling older people

Nico DE WITTE

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Department of Adult Educational Sciences - Belgian Ageing Studies

Population ageing, an ageing in place policy and the expectation of scarce resources for care resulted in an enhanced interest in the concept of frailty. For this concept, several definitions and conceptualizations were proposed, but a consensus is still missing. Biomedical approaches were developed using biomedical indicators. Here frailty is seen as a result of biological processes and can be measured using biomedical indicators. At the other end of the spectrum, multidimensional conceptualizations of frailty were developed in an attempt to capture the physical, psychological societal and environmental challenges older people face when ageing in place. In this context, the Comprehensive Frailty Assessment Instrument (CFAI), a 23 item self-administer instrument, was developed based on data from the Belgian Ageing Studies. During the validation study it was shown that all domains added to frailty and that the psychological domain added the most to the overall frailty score, pointing towards the fact that frailty is more than a physical problem. Afterwards cut-off (low-mild-high) were developed for each domain. Recent research showed that frailty is not equally distributed within Flemish communities, indicating local assessments of frailty are necessary. Therefore, pre-screening tools are developed for triage. Socio-demographic based tools enable communities to detect older people at risk for frailty in a specific domain. Likewise, other tools are developed containing some questions which can be used during normal conversations with older people. Based on the results of these tools, older people can be assessed for frailty using the CFAI.