

Eli's Rehab Report

Alzheimer's Disease Should Trigger Falls Risk Assessment, Study Suggests

New detection strategy could be in the near future.

Don't reserve your falls risk program for elderly patients. Your patients who present early warning signs of Alzheimer's disease need it, too.

People whose brain scans show signs of amyloid, an early indicator of Alzheimer's, have twice the risk of falls as people without amyloid -- even if they are otherwise healthy, according to a study reported at the **Alzheimer's Association's** annual International Conference in Paris.

Researchers measured the rate of falls among 125 older adults, many of whom were cognitively healthy and showed no memory problems but whose brain scans revealed amyloid. The patients were tasked to track how many times they fell over an eight-month period.

Of the group, 48 participants experienced at least one fall. Those who were positive for amyloid had double the risk for falls.

Potential: If the brain scans become more readily available, researchers can use them to pinpoint and track candidates for early Alzheimer's drug studies, or the scans could indicate that a patient will benefit from bone medication or PT that helps with balance.

In the meantime, otherwise healthy people who fall more than others should seek out a health care provider, suggests **William Thies**, chief medical and scientific officer for the **Alzheimer's Association**. And if patients are in the early stages of Alzheimer's, your falls risk program could be a life saver.