Frailty

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Objectives

- Define the term “frailty”
- Identify patients who meet the criteria for frailty
- Identify interventions for the frail patient
Why Is This New?

But I have heard this expression for a LONG time?

• This is a field of study that is rapidly expanding in:
  • Publications
  • Definitions
  • Screening Tools
  • Biological Understanding
  • Clinical Utility
Why Frailty Matters

![Graph comparing functional abilities between fit and frail older persons after minor illness](image)
Incidence

Just think about the size of the always increasing aging population...

- 3-7% of 65-75 year olds
- 20% of those >80 years old
- 33% of those >90%
Why Frailty Matters

- Up to 15% of community dwelling older adults
- A higher percentage of residents of assisted living communities
- Prevalence increases with age
- All will likely meet criteria if live long enough
POOR OUTCOMES!

✓ Increase incidence of falls
✓ Worsening mobility
✓ Social withdrawal
✓ Worsening ADL disability
✓ Delirium
✓ Increase hospitalizations
✓ Cognitive decline
✓ Death
What is frailty?

A person must exhibit 3 out of 5 of the following:

- Low physical activity
- Muscle weakness (decreased hand grips)
- Slowed performance
- Fatigue or poor endurance
- Unintentional weight loss
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Clinical criteria</th>
<th>Multiple comorbidities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polymedication</td>
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<td>Frequent hospitalizations</td>
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<td>Repeat falls</td>
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<td>Sensory deficit</td>
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<td>Urinary incontinence</td>
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<td>2. Functional criteria</td>
<td>Dependency in the basic activities of daily life</td>
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<td>Dependency in the instrumental activities of daily life</td>
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<td>3. Socioeconomic criteria</td>
<td>Lives alone</td>
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<td>Recently widowed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Institutionalization</td>
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<td>Age &gt;80 y</td>
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<td>Low economic status</td>
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<td>4. Cognitive-affective criteria</td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<td>Cognitive deterioration</td>
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Adapted from Martinez Martin et al.
The Downward Spiral...

- More likely to become disabled, hospitalized, and have more health problems
- Susceptible to infection
  - Simple infections may even result in death
- Loss of muscle mass
- Inability to prepare meals increases malnutrition
**Sarcopenia**
- Skeletal muscle loss
- Poor muscle quality

**Physical Function Impairment**
- Weak muscle strength
- Slow gait speed
- Poor balance

**Frailty**
- Deficits accumulation
- Fatigue
- Sedentary behaviour
- Weight loss
- Cognitive impairment
- Social isolation
Frailty Tools - Which One?

No consensus on how to best measure it!!!
Goals for Frailty Interventions

- Improve quality of life
- Prevent worsening of chronic diseases
- Reduce risk for adverse or catastrophic outcomes
- Risk assessment to guide therapeutic options and goal setting
Treating Frailty

- Individualized (determine goals & priorities of care)
- Coordinate services- TEAM based care for inpatients and outpatients
- Treating underlying disease process
- Medication management (BEERS list)
- PT/OT - EXERCISE
- Nutrition
- Pain management
- Fall prevention
- Environmental assessment
- Encourage socialization
- Palliative Care approaches – sometimes less is better……
Prevention

- Manage comorbidities – DM, CHF, HTN, PVD
- Daily exercise
- Keep the mind active (i.e. crossword puzzles, reading, socializing)
- Treat depression
- Seek treatment of medical and psychiatric problems
- Healthy diet
Interventions
Frailty.net is an international educational resource that aims to help geriatricians, primary care physicians and other health care professionals involved in the care of older persons implement frailty into clinical practice.
Questions?
References

- Ko, F.C. (2011); Clinical Geriatrics in Medicine; 27(1):89-100