Abstract

The relationship between aging and increased life expectancy in the overall population likely contributes to a higher frequency rate and incidence of illnesses and functional disabilities. Physical dependence and cognitive impairment might hinder the performance of activities and result in an overload of care duties for the patient's family and the healthcare system. Objective: The aim of this study was to compare the functional and cognitive changes exhibited by the elderly over a 6-month period. Method: This longitudinal and observational study was conducted in a sample of 167 elderly people, who were selected from the database of the Network of Studies on Frailty in Brazilian Elderly, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais - UFMG. The participants submitted to the Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE), Katz Index, Lawton and Brody’s scale and responded to items on Advanced Activities of Daily Living (AADLs). We analyzed the data using multivariate regression models. Results: The participants’ functional capacity exhibited reduced performance of specific instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), \( p=0.002 \), and basic activities of daily living (BADLs), \( p=0.038 \). Living alone (odds ratio (OR), 2.53; 95% confidence interval (CI), 1.09-5.87) and work status (OR, 2.52; 95% CI, 1.18-5.41) were associated with changes in the IADLs. The scores in the AADL scale (\( p=0.163 \)) and MMSE (\( p=0.059 \)) did not exhibit any significant difference during the study period. The participants with better cognitive function were more independent in their performance of AADLs and IADLs. Conclusion: The results depict specific patterns of loss and stability of functional capacity in community-dwelling elderly.

Keywords

Elderly, activities of daily life, cognition, rehabilitation.