

Fall Related Hospitalizations among Alberta Seniors

Age-Standardized Rates per 100,000 Seniors Aged 65+, by Sex, 2003 – 2013

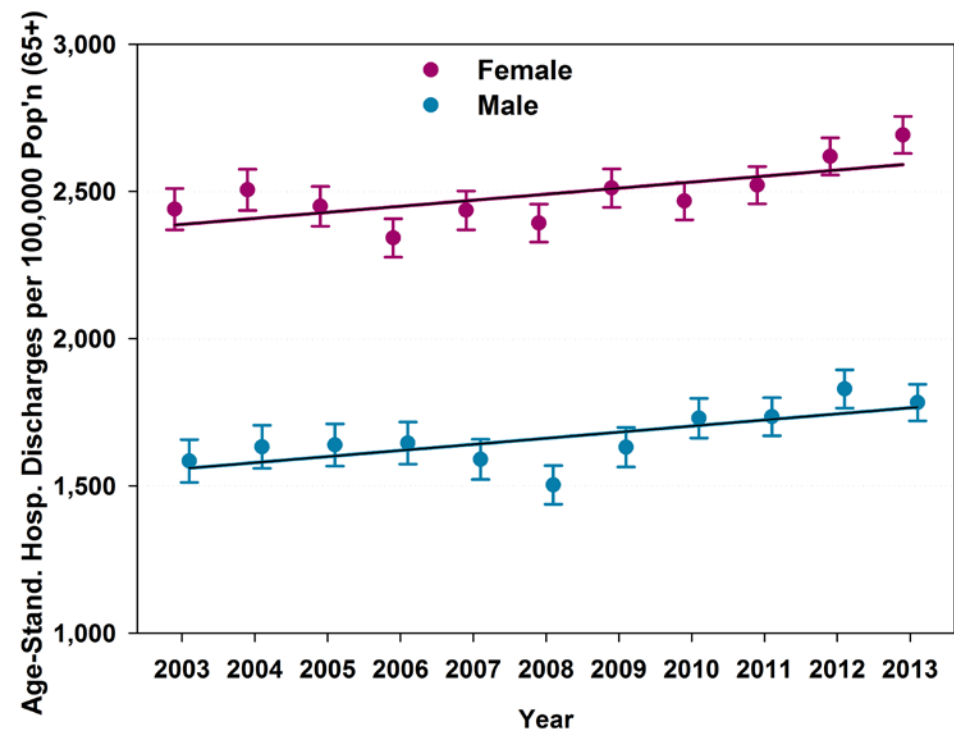
The January 20, 2015 edition of *Health Trends Alberta* revealed that the rate at which male seniors die from falls was significantly higher than for females, and that the rate of mortality was increasing. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada,¹ falls account for 85 per cent of all injury related hospitalizations among seniors. Today's issue of *Health Trends Alberta* shows the age-standardized rate of unintentional fall-related hospitalizations per 100,000 Alberta seniors aged 65+, by sex, for the years 2003 to 2013.

Female seniors, hospitalized for falls more frequently

The rate of fall-related hospitalizations among female Alberta seniors is on average about 1.5 times higher than males. This contradicts what is seen with mortality rates where male seniors are more likely to die from a fall. Furthermore, while there is an increasing hospitalization trend, it is less than the increase in mortality presented previously.

Among all seniors hospitalized between 2003 and 2013, males were more likely to have had a head or neck injury than females (22.2 vs. 12.5 per cent). Head and neck injuries for seniors result in worse outcomes; 12.1 per cent of all head/neck hospitalizations for seniors were discharged as deceased, compared to 5.6 per cent for non-head and neck injury. It was also seen that over the past 11 years, there has been a steadily increasing proportion of senior's fall-related hospitalizations that were head and neck related (6.8 vs 11.9 per cent in 2003 vs. 2013).

A difference in hospitalization rates for senior's falls was observed using neighbourhood income quintiles as a proxy for socio-economic factors. A slight increase in the rates (per 100,000 for all years 2003 to 2013) can be seen as the incomes decline as follows: Q1 (Lowest income): 2,320; Q2/Q3 (Middle incomes): 2,140; and Q4/Q5 (Highest Incomes): 2,040.



¹ Public Health Agency of Canada. The Facts: Seniors and Injury in Canada, 2011. Accessed February 3, 2015 from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/publications/public/injury-blessure/safelive-secure/chap2-eng.php>