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Low blood pressure study reveals some areas for caution

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A local study has found that being older than 70 is one of the links to low blood pressure, which could cause falls.

The 2013 study of 364 patients, aged 64 to 98, from Geylang Polyclinic found that around one in 10 of these patients has a form of low blood pressure called orthostatic hypotension.

This is a condition in which the blood pressure drops when a person changes his or her posture, such as from lying or sitting down to standing up.

People who have this condition are more prone to falls as they feel dizzy when they stand up from a resting position and can easily lose their balance.

While the study did not find the causes of orthostatic hypotension, researchers noted links between the condition and older age, and inactivity at work.

It also found links between the condition and medical conditions which affect blood circulation, such as heart failure, stroke and kidney disease.

There was also a link between orthostatic hypotension and patients who use loop diuretics, a kind of diuretic or medicine that causes an increase in urine. It is used to treat hypertension and fluid retention.

The study was conducted by SingHealth Polyclinic researchers and students from the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine at the National University of Singapore.

"Singapore's population is rapidly ageing... healthcare workers who are aware of this condition can look out for it, try to prevent it and educate patients," said Dr Gilbert Tan, assistant director of clinical services at SingHealth Polyclinics, who is one of the researchers involved in the study.

"For doctors, they could be a bit more cautious in giving medication such as loop diuretics, advising the patients and monitoring their condition," he said.

All SingHealth Polyclinics offer a risk assessment for falls.

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