

Healthy Ageing & Frailty

Information for Clinicians



phn
GOLD COAST

An Australian Government Initiative



What is Frailty?

Frailty is a common syndrome that occurs from a combination of deconditioning and acute illness on a background of existing functional decline that is often under recognised.

Frailty can affect up to 25% people aged 70 and over, this equates to approximately 20,413 people residing within the Gold Coast.

Patients living with frailty have two to three times the health care utilization of their non-frail counterparts and experience higher morbidity, mortality, and lower quality of life. Their carers can also experience high levels of stress.

Many causes of frailty can be managed and, in some cases reversed, highlighting the importance of identifying older people who are living with frailty.

You may find the following risk screen, 'The FRAIL Scale' validated by Professor John Morley and management suggestions useful to identify and treat patients aged 75+ and over.

Frailty Management / Decision Tool

Assessment Score	Intervention	Referral/Follow Up
FRAIL scale 0 = robust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage ongoing activity levels Provide (Queensland Health Ageing with Vitality Guide) resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-do FRAIL scale in 12 months City of Gold Coast Active & Healthy programs with balance/resistant component Example of exercises in (Queensland Health Ageing with Vitality Guide) resource
FRAIL SCALE	If Frailty Score is positive, address underlying causes as suggested below	
F	Feeling fatigued most or all of the time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider screening for reversible causes of fatigue (sleep apnoea, depression, anaemia, hypotension, hypothyroidism, B12 deficiency) Use EDWORTH scale, K10 or Geriatric Depression scale in Health Assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider referral to Geriatrician / Specialist for complex care patients Consider referral to Occupational Therapy for function and home review Consider referral Psychologist using Mental Health Care Plan Consider referral to Aged Care organisation for loneliness support (isolation can be a cause of fatigue) 	
R	Resistance against gravity – Difficulty walking up 10 steps without resting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider referring to an individualised progressive exercise program with resistance and strength component
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physiotherapy or Exercise Physiologist for exercise prescription If has diabetes- > group session Medicare funded Exercise Physiologist GCPHN funded programs for group exercise prescription Gold Coast Health Falls and Balance Clinic Gold Coast Health Mungulli Clinic 	
A	Ambulation – Difficulty walking 300 metres unaided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider referring to an individualised progressive exercise program with resistance and strength component.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physiotherapy or Exercise Physiologist for exercise prescription If has diabetes- > group session Medicare funded Exercise Physiologist GCPHN funded programs for group exercise prescription Exercise options available through City of Gold Coast Active Ageing programs 	
I	Having 5 or more illnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review indication, side effects and use of medication (evidence for use of some medicines changes after 75!) Consider discussing with pharmacist Consider reducing/de-prescribing superfluous medication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharmacist for comprehensive medication review, (HMR item 900) Occupational Therapy for functional and home safety review Self-management support from aged care org volunteer 	
L	Loss of > 5% weight in 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider screening for reversible causes of weight loss and consider Protein and caloric supplementation/food fortification (75mg protein per day required – range of products available at pharmacy) Advice and encourage healthy eating; provide (Queensland Health Ageing with Vitality Guide) resource
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weigh and assess BMI – record in patient record Dietician for diet review and management Add Sustagen Meal Delivery Services Speech pathologist for swallowing review Dentist for dental review (pain/infection/ill fitting dentures) Occupational Therapy for functional and home cooking ability review 	

Frail Scale Risk Assessment

	Question	Scoring	Result
F	FATIGUE How much of the time during the past 4 weeks did you feel tired? A = All or most of the time B = Some, a little or none of the time	A = 1 B = 0	
R	RESISTANCE In the last 4 weeks by yourself and not using aids, do you have any difficulty walking up 10 steps without resting?	Yes = 1 No = 0	
A	AMBULATION In the last 4 weeks by yourself and not using aids, do you have any difficulty walking 300 metres OR one block?	Yes = 1 No = 0	
I	ILLNESS Did your Doctor ever tell you that you have? <input type="checkbox"/> Hypertension <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer (not a minor skin cancer) <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic lung disease <input type="checkbox"/> Heart attack <input type="checkbox"/> Congestive heart failure <input type="checkbox"/> Angina <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis <input type="checkbox"/> Kidney disease <input type="checkbox"/> Stroke or Parkinson's	0 – 4 answers YES = 0 5 – 11 answers YES = 1	
L	LOSS OF WEIGHT Have you lost more than 5kg or 5% of your body weight in the past year?	Yes = 1 No = 0	
TOTAL SCORE			
SCORING: ROBUST = 0 PRE-FRAIL = 1-2 FRAIL = >3			

Contact Us

Click on the link below to view more information on our website or contact GCPHN Practice Support to find out more about undertaking a Quality Improvement activity for Frailty within your practice.



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www.gcphn.org.au/FrailtyandHealthyAgeing

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