

# Diferenças no equilíbrio nas pessoas idosas na comunidade

## *Balance differences in community based older people*

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**Background:** Falls have high incidence in elderly. It is known that balance is a modifiable risk factor for falls and it is influenced by many factors. However, how age, gender or body composition influences the different balance systems and balance confidence remains unknown.

**Objective:** Explore the balance systems and confidence differences according to age, gender or body composition in elderly.

**Materials and Methods:** A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted. Socio-demographic, anthropometric and general clinical data were collected with a structured questionnaire. Berg Balance Scale (BBS) and Balance Evaluation System Test (BESTest) assessed balance. Activities-specific Balance Confidence (ABC) assessed balance confidence. Data was analysed per age decade and the significance level was set at  $p < .05$ .

**Results:** 136 elderly (75.9±8.8 years old; 96 female) participated in this study. BESTest and BBS showed that balance decreases significantly with age ( $p = .001$ ). The Reactive presented the worst balance systems results. Balance confidence was significantly better in the 70-79 group. Balance and balance confidence were significantly worse in female ( $p = .033$ ). Body composition presented no significant differences.

**Discussion:** This study showed that age and gender significantly affect balance performance and confidence whereas body composition does not seem to have a significant impact on elderly balance. **Conclusão/Conclusions** This information can contribute to develop tailored falls preventions programs. Specific performance and confidence balance treatments/programs might be developed for each population instead of being generalised as a single problem for everybody.

**Key-words:** Balance; Elderly; Body Composition; Gender.