

## Senior Safety:

# To prevent falls among elderly

- a local based project testing multifactorial interventions to prevent falls among elderly in 16 Norwegian municipalities, 2007 - 2009.

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## Background

Norway has a very high level of broken hip injuries and in particular women over the age of 80 are affected. The main cause of broken hip injuries is fall accidents. These accidents represent a large cost for the individual, his / her relatives and society. Broken hip injuries caused by fall accidents affect close to 10.000 persons annually in Norway, with a total population of 4,9 million. The cost for hospitalisation and rehabilitation is about EUR 423 million per year. The increased numbers of seniors in the years to come will entail an increasing number of senior accidents. Studies show that senior accidents can be prevented through simple measures when:

- Multi-factor interventions are utilised
- A variety of professions and social sectors work together
- There is collaboration between public institutions and non-governmental organisations
- The implemented measures are based on local resources

## A three year project for Senior Safety

With our project "Senior Safety" we wanted to introduce a model for sustainable inter-disciplinary co-operation based on studies and experiences. This would give the participating municipalities a tool to develop local based activities. The project was a laboratory to develop and try out local initiatives and activities, as well as different ways of organizing and developing collaborative solutions. We had formed three goals:

- To reduce the incidence of hip fractures among the elderly
- To demonstrate that senior safety will be improved if public and private sectors work closer together
- To establish sustainable structures for injury prevention and safety promotion for elderly in the participating municipalities

## Implementation

16 municipalities from different parts of the country took part in the project. The target group were seniors 65+. A local coordinator in each place worked in close contact with the national project leader, who had a coordinating and consulting role, and functioned as a source of inspiration. The municipalities found their own ways to organize, co-operate and develop interventions. Project meetings

were held on regular bases. All activities and all participating organizations/institutions were registered. The project was financed by Norwegian Safety Forum, Norwegian Directorate of Health and Terra Insurance

## Examples of successful interventions

- Fall registration
- Programs for physical activities
- Safety checks of private homes carried out by volunteers
- Brochures, lectures and teaching based on local resources
- Reporting of unsafe condition in the community
- Spreading sand in the winter



Co-operation between different sectors promotes better results.

## Results and experiences

A total of 94 interventions have been initiated and carried out. Most of these are now integrated in the local plans and programs for Senior Safety Promotion. More than 40 NGOs took part in the local activities, for example The Red Cross, Lions and youth organizations. Co-operation has functioned best where the political as well as the administrative leaders in the municipality have given their support, and where a local committee has been established with representatives from different community sectors, NGOs, volunteers and senior citizens. All of the participating municipalities are below the average rate for hip accidents in Norway.

### References in samples:

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