Balance Training in Pulmonary Rehabilitation to Reduce Fall Risk

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Setting the scene:
To determine the efficacy of a balance training program for fall risk reduction in outpatient pulmonary rehabilitation (PR)

What did they do?
Forty-nine participants in an outpatient PR program participated in a balance training program in addition to the standard PR exercises. Balance was assessed with the Activities Specific Balance Confidence (ABC) scale, Mini-BESTest (MBT), and Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB). Gait speed, 5 times sit to stand test (5TSTS), and Timed Up and Go (TUG) data were extracted for analysis. Progressive lower-extremity strengthening and balance specific exercises were performed during each PR session. Over 90% of participants presented with at least one balance assessment that indicated an increased fall risk and 81% had mobility limitations based on an SPPB score <10. During the final assessment, only 16.2% of the participants were at fall risk and 13.5% had mobility limitations.

Takeaway message:
Incorporating a balance training program into a PR program may help to decrease fall risk and increase balance confidence in functional activities.