

Saving senior's lives thorough play

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Guy Shaham, who introduced the outdoor fitness equipment concept to Canada back in 2007 with a mission to fight the ever growing obesity rates, is now launching his breakthrough Agile Activity Systems, a seniors' play structure developed to reduce seniors' fall-related injuries and potentially save lives. www.agileactivitysystems.com

"With our new Agile Activity system, seniors' falls can be dramatically reduced through play that builds muscle strength and balance," states Mr. Shaham, Founder and CEO of Agile Activity Systems.

World Health Organization (WHO) statistics indicate that one-third of people aged 65 years and over typically fall once or more each year. Falls are the most common cause of injury and the 6th leading cause of death for seniors; almost half of admissions to long-term care facilities are fall-related.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealed that in 2010, the total direct medical costs of fall injuries for people 65 and older was \$30 billion (adjusted for inflation). The CDC claims that by 2020, the annual direct and indirect cost of fall injuries is expected to reach \$54.9 billion. Among community-dwelling older adults, fall-related injury is one of the 20 most expensive medical conditions.

"Falls are caused by a lack of balance or an inability to recover balance", says Mr. Shaham. "There are many factors that can influence balance, including some age-related physical and mental health problems, and environmental trip hazards. Physicians, nurses and care givers often interact with older adult patients who have experienced a fall or fall-related event, yet there are few validated tools readily available to assess the nature of the risk and guide the application of proven fall prevention strategies," concludes Mr. Shaham.

Agile Activity Systems can dramatically reduce the growing number of falls and fractures among older adults by engaging primary care physicians, nurses, and other seniors' care givers to use the playful structure as an assessment platform and later as fall prevention training and rehabilitation tool.

The senior play concept was developed in Helsinki, Finland after 6 years of intensive research and countless hours of observing seniors' movements. However, Agile Activity System is taking the existing product available in Europe a few steps forward, allowing physiotherapists and nurses to adjust the height, distance and angular positioning of every game or accessory so it can be customized to every user's physical abilities and needs.

"For years it has been recognized that there is a need for standardized interventions in primary care to ensure seniors take advantage of every opportunity to reduce the risk of falls and fractures," says Shaham.

Agile Activity Systems improves seniors' stability, balance and coordination. The company is also introducing memory games and other fun challenges that engage seniors in socialization – and as a result, the training or rehabilitation process becomes fun, un-intimidating and more effective.

Agile Activity Systems is calling seniors' home communities, care facilities, senior centers, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, hospitals and municipalities to implement the Activity Systems in their outdoor or indoor spaces, to encourage senior residents and patients to participate in daily play.

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