



12.6. Fall incidents in the elderly (ELD-7)

12.6.1. Documentation sheet

Description	Percentage of residents who had a fall incident in the previous month (data from Flemish quality indicators in homes for the elderly)
Calculation	Numerator: number of residents who had at least one fall during the month of May Denominator: total number of residents in the month of May
Rationale	<p>Fall incidents are a common cause of morbidity and mortality in elderly. Persons who fell once, have an increased risk on future fall incidents. It is estimated that one in 10 falls result in a hip fracture or other severe injury, which often lead to functional impairment and even death.^{1,2}</p> <p>The recovery from a fall is strongly related to the functional status of the elderly before the fall.³ The European Injury Database (IDB) showed that falls are a major cause of death (28%) in older people (60+y), particularly in women. Fall injuries lead also to a higher than average hospitalisation rate and an excess share in medical costs due to injuries in this age group.⁴ Due to the ageing population, the incidence of falls, related injuries and healthcare costs are expected to increase.</p> <p>In the future nationwide data collection on this indicator should be possible by the roll out of BelRAI. This will also facilitate the analysis on evolution over time. BelRAI measures fall incidents as part of the Long-Term Care Facility (LTCF) and Home Care (HC) modules. Currently BelRAI is being implemented but not yet nationally fully operational in all care settings. (http://wiki.belrai.org/nl/)</p>
Data source	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flemish quality indicators in nursing homes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2016 data, based on 756 WZC^{5,6}○ 2017 data, based on 779 WZC⁷• HIS: New data from HIS are expected for 2019. As soon as the new data are available, the results will be added to the online version of this report on www.healthcareinbelgium.be.
Technical definitions	Flemish quality indicator projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numerator: number of residents that had at least one fall incident in the month of May• Denominator: number of residents that were present for at least one day in the homes for the elderly (WZC) in the month of May
International comparability	In the OECD long-term care quality project the indicator on the incidence of falls and fall-related fractures is proposed as example of a quality outcome on user safety. ⁸
Dimensions	Quality (safety)



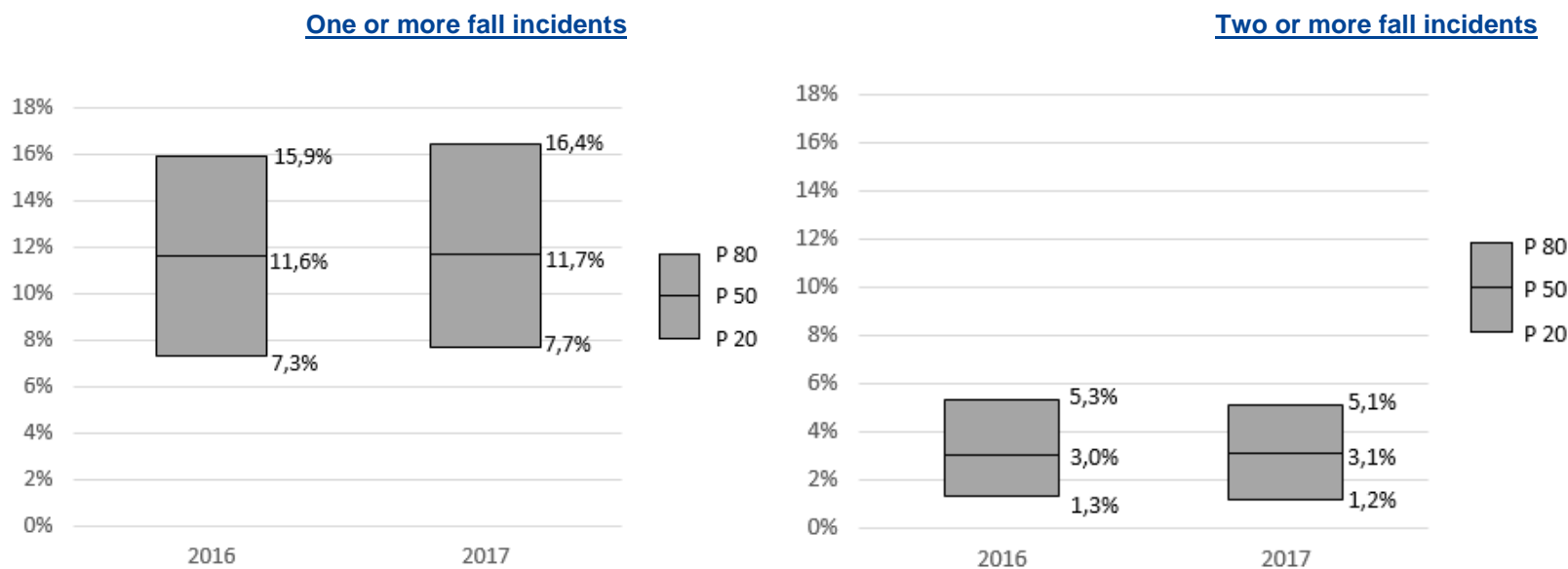
12.6.2. Results

Recent data on fall incidents in elderly are only available for the Flemish community, where they are measured in the context of the Flemish Indicator Project in the homes for the elderly. Fall incidents were previously reported for the whole Belgian population in the Health Interview Survey (HIS), but as the most recent data date back to the year 2013 and were presented in the

previous performance report, we do not include them in this report. New data from HIS are expected for 2019 and as soon as available we will add the results to the online version of this report on www.healthcareinbelgium.be.

The Flemish data show that a median of 12% of residents in homes for the elderly had a fall incident during a period of a month in 2017. Data for 2016 are relatively similar. Further data collection in the future will allow to monitor the evolution over time.

Figure 179 – Percentage of residents with one or more (left graph) or two or more fall incidents (right graph) in one month



Source: Vlaams Indicatorenproject Woonzorgcentra (Vlaams Agentschap voor Zorg en Gezondheid)



Key points

- **A median of 12% of residents in Flemish WZC had a fall incident in a month time in 2017.**
- **More policy initiatives should be taken to prevent fall injuries in the elderly.**

References

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