Walking ability, balance and accidental falls in persons with MS

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Walking and balance disability is common in persons with MS and may lead to accidental falls. The symptoms may be exaggerated due to heat-sensitivity and, thus, further negatively impact activity and participation. Interventions aiming to reduce the impact of heat-sensitivity need to be evaluated. Standardised measures are required to evaluate interventions, describe the impact of disease, and to follow the course of MS. The possibilities and limitations of such measures need to be illuminated. Knowledge with regard to accidental falls in persons with MS is rather sparse. By gaining increased knowledge of frequency and circumstances regarding accidental falls, more attention can be directed to this phenomenon in clinical practice. With the possibility of predicting an increased risk of falling, interventions aiming to reduce the frequency of falling can be designed.

This dissertation presents different aspects of walking and balance abilities and accidental falls in persons with MS using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Both subjective and objective aspects, and the evaluation of measures in terms of reliability, validity and predictive values, are presented.