

Validation of the Berg-Balance-Scale in patients with an incomplete SCI

Markus Wirz

Not every patient with a spinal cord injury depends on a wheelchair. About half of the subjects suffer an incomplete lesion meaning that motor function of the legs is only partially affected. The majority of these patients are able to walk, although the walking function can be impaired. A recently published study showed that patients with an incomplete spinal cord injury who are able to walk are prone to falls. My current study aims at estimating the risk for falling in these patients. For that, an already existing test which has been developed for a different group of patients is used. The Berg-Balance-Scale comprises 14 tasks which challenge balance. Depending on the performance a higher or lower score is given for the completion of each task. The overall number of points will be compared to the number and severity of falls within five months. If the test proves to be able to identify patients with an increased risk for falling it will be possible to apply preventive measures during rehabilitation in order to avoid fall-related injuries.