



# Predictors of falls and fractures leading to hospitalization in people with schizophrenia spectrum disorder: A large representative cohort study

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** To investigate predictors of falls/fractures leading to hospitalisation in people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders.

**Methods:** A historical cohort of people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (ICD F20–29) from 01/2006–12/2012 was assembled using data from the South London and Maudsley NHS Biomedical Research Centre Case Register. Falls/fractures were ascertained from a linkage to national hospitalisation data. Separate multivariate Cox regression analyses were employed to identify predictors of falls and fractures.

**Results:** Of 11,567 people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (mean age 42.6 years, 43% female), 579 (incidence rate 12.79 per 1000 person-years) and 528 (11.65 per 1000 person-years) had at least one reported hospital admission due to a fall or fracture respectively and 822 patients had at least either a recorded fall or a fracture during this period (i.e. 7.1% of sample). Overall, 6.69 and 10.74 years of inpatient hospital stay per 1000-person years of follow-up occurred due to a fall and fracture respectively. 14(0.12%) and 28(0.24%) died due to a fall and fracture respectively. In Multivariable analysis, increasing age, white ethnicity, analgesics, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diseases of the genitourinary system, visual disturbance and syncope were significant risk factor for both falls and fractures. A previous fracture (HR 2.05, 95% CI 1.53–2.73) and osteoporosis (HR 6.79, 95% CI 4.71–9.78) were strong risk factors for consequent fractures.

**Conclusion:** Comorbid physical health conditions and analgesic medication prescription were associated with higher risk of falls and fractures. Osteoporosis and previous fracture were strong predictors for subsequent fractures. Interventions targeting bone health and falls/fractures need to be developed and evaluated in these populations.

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## 1. Introduction

Falls and fractures are associated with considerable morbidity, reduced quality of life and healthcare expenditure (Johnell & Kanis, 2004). In Europe, fractures account for more disability adjusted life years (DALYs) than all common cancers, with the exception of lung cancer (Johnell & Kanis, 2006). Osteoporosis is a key risk factor that greatly increases an individual's risk of experiencing a fracture (Kanis et al., 2010, 2013). Fractures, particularly of the hip, are associated with substantial morbidity, healthcare costs, deterioration in mobility, reduced

social function and admission to long term care facilities (Kanis, 2002a, 2002b, Johnell & Kanis, 2006, Kanis et al., 2010, 2013). Moreover, reduced bone mineral density increases a person's risk of death from a fall (Sanchez-Riera et al., 2014). In recognition of this, improving bone health and preventing fractures are a global public health priority (Kanis, 2002a, 2002b, Johnell & Kanis, 2006).

People with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders have a number of risk factors which increase their risk of lower bone mineral density and osteoporosis (Kishimoto et al., 2012), including high rates of diabetes (Stubbs et al., 2015d), vitamin D deficiency (Lally et al., 2016), sedentary lifestyles (Stubbs et al., 2015b) and poor nutritional intake (Dipasquale et al., 2013). Additionally, raised prolactin, which is associated with some antipsychotic agents, has been suggested to accelerate bone loss (Tseng et al., 2015; De Hert et al., 2016; Gonzalez-Blanco

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et al., 2016). A recent meta-analysis found that people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (with a mean age of 44 years) were 2.5 times more likely to have osteoporosis than controls (Stubbs et al., 2014b). Another meta-analysis in this clinical population (with a mean age of 33 years) concluded higher likelihood of reduced bone mineral density (BMD) at the femur (standardised mean difference (SMD)  $-0.5$ ) and lumbar spine (SMD  $-1.23$ ) compared to matched controls without mental disorders (Gomez et al., 2016). Consistent with this, another recent meta-analysis demonstrated that people with schizophrenia are at a 72% increased risk of experiencing fractures compared to the general population (Stubbs et al., 2015c). However, the authors noted that there was a paucity of information on predictors of fractures in people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders, which have only been investigated in three representative cohort studies to date (Sorensen et al., 2013; Tsai et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2015). Of these, one largely focussed on antipsychotic medication as an exposure (Wu et al., 2015), two focussed only on hip fractures as an outcome (Sorensen et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2015) and only one provided information on predictors of fractures in Europe (Sorensen et al., 2013). No representative cohort has, to the best of our knowledge, investigated the predictors of falls in people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders, despite their importance as a precursor to fractures.

Given these limitations, we conducted a representative cohort study investigating predictors of falls and fractures leading to hospitalisation among people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (ICD 10 codes F20–29). Secondly, we investigated length of hospital stay as a result of falls and fractures in this group.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Study setting and data source

A retrospective observational study was conducted using data from the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) Case Register. SLaM is one of Europe's largest mental healthcare providers, serving a geographic catchment of four south London boroughs (Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, and Croydon) with a population in excess of 1.2 million people. The data for the current study were captured from the Clinical Record Interactive Search (CRIS) application, which generates an anonymised version of SLaM's electronic health record within a robust governance framework (Perera et al., 2016a). The SLaM BRC Case Register has been described in detail (Perera et al., 2016a) and has supported a range of studies (Chang et al., 2010; Hayes et al., 2011; Perera et al., 2014; Sultana et al., 2014; Ward et al., 2015; Perera et al., 2016b). Data are currently archived in CRIS on over 350,000 cases with a range of mental disorders and the database, with associated data linkages, has approval for secondary analysis (Oxford Research Ethics Committee C, reference 08/H0606/71 + 5). Data from CRIS have been supplemented through natural language processing (NLP) applications using Generalised Architecture for Text Engineering (GATE) software, applying information extraction techniques to derive structured information from the extensive text fields held in the mental health record (Perera et al., 2016a).

### 2.2. Participants and study period

All SLaM patients with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders, defined as schizophrenia, schizotypal and delusional disorder (ICD10 codes F20–F29), with a diagnosis at any point between 1st of January 2007 and 31st March 2013, were included in the current study. SLaM patient records were linked with national Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) which are compiled from all NHS Trusts in England (both acute and mental health services), including statistical abstracts of records of all inpatient episodes, as well as outpatient and emergency care (Perera et al., 2016a). In addition CRIS data were linked to the Office for National

Statistics (ONS) mortality records over the same period to investigate mortality due to falls and fractures.

### 2.3. Primary outcome: falls and fractures

The primary outcome was hospital admission resulting from a fall or fracture extracted from linked HES data and all discharge diagnoses (primary or any secondary diagnosis codes) recorded between January 2007 to March 2013 based on the following ICD 10 codes: i) falls (W00–W19); ii) fractures (M80–M84, M907, S02, S12, S32, S42, S52, S62, S72, S82, S92, S22, T02, T08, T10, T12X, T902, T911, T912, T921). In addition, linked mortality records from the ONS were examined for any instance of fall or fracture ICD codes in any cause of death field on the death certificate to identify the date of death due to a fall or fracture.

### 2.4. Measurements

A range of additional measurements were obtained from CRIS. All independent variables (covariates) were defined according to the value closest to the date of the first recorded schizophrenia-spectrum diagnosis. Demographic covariates comprised: age at diagnosis, gender, ethnicity (White-European and Non-White) and index of multiple deprivation (IMD 2010) for the neighbourhood of residence (Lower Super Output Area) at the time of diagnosis. The IMD has previously been used in CRIS (Das-Munshi et al., 2017) and takes into account area-level deprivation from Census data across several domains including income, employment, health, education, barriers to housing and services, living environment, and crime (Richardson et al., 2009). Information on cohabiting status (Cohabiting: married/civil partner, married, cohabiting; Non-cohabiting: single, divorced, civil partnership dissolved, widowed, separated) was ascertained at the time of schizophrenia-spectrum diagnosis, supplemented by a binary variable derived using NLP on text mentions of the patient living alone.

The Health of the Nation Outcome Scales (HoNOS) (Wing et al., 1998) are routinely administered measures of illness burden in UK mental health services and are recorded in structured fields on the electronic health record. Individual HoNOS item scores (agitated behaviour, self-injury, problem drinking & drugs, cognitive problems, physical illness, hallucinations, depressed mood, relationship problems, daily living problems, living conditions problems, occupational problems) and dates were obtained within 6 months before or after the index date (date of schizophrenia-spectrum diagnosis), and the closest scores in time to this date were included in analyses. Those scores 2 or over in the Individual HoNOS scores were classified as having a problem on each HoNOS score.

### 2.5. Mental disorder comorbidity

Diagnoses of affective disorders (ICD10 F30–F39), neurotic, stress-related and somatoform disorders (F40–F48) were ascertained within one year before or after the diagnosis of schizophrenia-spectrum.

### 2.6. Medication

Medications received by participants were extracted from structured medication fields in the record, supplemented by an NLP applications applied to text fields ascertaining mentions of current medication (Perera et al., 2016a). Presence or not of the following medication groups was ascertained on the basis of information within one year before or after first diagnosis of schizophrenia-spectrum disorders: benzodiazepines, anticholinergics, antihypertensives, antidepressants, antipsychotics, anxiolytics and hypnotics, and analgesics. The total number of medications prescribed was calculated for each participant and used as a continuous variable.

**Table 1**  
Characteristics of those schizophrenia spectrum disorder patients who were admitted to hospital with a fall/fracture after a diagnosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorders (F20\* to F29\*).

| Characteristics of sample   | Presence of falls |               | Presence of fractures |               |
|---|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
|   | No (n = 10,988)   | Yes (n = 579) | No (n = 11,174)       | Yes (n = 528) |
| <i>Year of first recorded diagnosis</i>   |                   |               |                       |               |
| 2006  | 1826 (91.6)       | 167 (8.4)     | 1858 (93.2)           | 135 (6.8)     |
| 2007  | 2396 (93.9)       | 157 (6.1)     | 2399 (94)             | 154 (6)       |
| 2008  | 1573 (95.0)       | 83 (5.0)      | 1570 (94.8)           | 86 (5.2)      |
| 2009  | 1364 (96.1)       | 56 (3.9)      | 1360 (95.8)           | 60 (4.2)      |
| 2010  | 1403 (95.6)       | 64 (4.4)      | 1420 (96.8)           | 47 (3.2)      |
| 2011  | 1194 (96.8)       | 40 (3.2)      | 1204 (97.6)           | 30 (2.4)      |
| 2012  | 1232 (99.0)       | 12 (1.0)      | 1228 (98.7)           | 16 (1.3)      |
| <i>Age</i>  |                   |               |                       |               |
| 18–34   | 4340 (98.0)       | 87 (2.0)      | 4319 (97.6)           | 108 (2.4)     |
| 35–49   | 3849 (97.6)       | 96 (2.4)      | 3822 (96.9)           | 123 (3.1)     |
| 50–64   | 1637 (92.8)       | 127 (7.2)     | 1655 (93.8)           | 109 (6.2)     |
| 65–79   | 892 (84.2)        | 167 (15.8)    | 943 (89.0)            | 116 (11.0)    |
| 80 & over   | 270 (72.6)        | 102 (27.4)    | 300 (80.6)            | 72 (19.4)     |
| <i>Gender</i>   |                   |               |                       |               |
| Female  | 4670 (93.9)       | 305 (6.1)     | 4711 (94.7)           | 264 (5.3)     |
| Male  | 6318 (95.8)       | 274 (4.2)     | 6328 (96.0)           | 264 (4.0)     |
| <i>Ethnicity</i>  |                   |               |                       |               |
| White   | 5480 (92.7)       | 434 (7.3)     | 5529 (93.5)           | 385 (6.5)     |
| Non-White   | 5508 (97.4)       | 145 (2.6)     | 5510 (97.5)           | 143 (2.5)     |
| <i>Marital status</i>   |                   |               |                       |               |
| Cohabiting  | 2356 (95.4)       | 113 (4.6)     | 2366 (95.8)           | 103 (4.2)     |
| Non-cohabiting  | 8632 (94.9)       | 466 (5.1)     | 8673 (95.3)           | 425 (4.7)     |
| <i>Living status</i>  |                   |               |                       |               |
| Living with someone   | 8647 (95.6)       | 402 (4.4)     | 8678 (95.9)           | 371 (4.1)     |
| Living alone  | 2341 (93.0)       | 177 (7.0)     | 2361 (93.8)           | 157 (6.2)     |
| Index of multiple deprivation: IMD 2010 (SD)  | 29.4 (11.1)       | 29.3 (11.1)   | 29.5 (11.1)           | 28.9 (11.1)   |
| <i>Medication prescription (within one year before or after diagnosis schizophrenia spectrum disorders)</i>           |                   |               |                       |               |
| Benzodiazepines   | 3821 (95.9)       | 163 (4.1)     | 3831 (96.2)           | 153 (3.8)     |
| Anticholinergics  | 5068 (95.8)       | 223 (4.2)     | 5079 (96.0)           | 212 (4.0)     |
| Antihypertensive  | 1058 (88.5)       | 137 (11.5)    | 1095 (91.6)           | 100 (8.4)     |
| Antidepressants   | 3161 (94.3)       | 192 (5.7)     | 3191 (95.2)           | 162 (4.8)     |
| Antipsychotics  | 7714 (95.4)       | 371 (4.6)     | 7744 (95.8)           | 341 (4.2)     |
| Anxiolytics and hypnotics   | 3753 (95.8)       | 166 (4.2)     | 3765 (96.1)           | 154 (3.9)     |
| Analgesics  | 1130 (89.4)       | 134 (10.6)    | 1150 (91.0)           | 114 (9.0)     |
| <i>Number of medications received (within one year before or after diagnosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorder)</i>  |                   |               |                       |               |
| 0   | 2198 (94.1)       | 138 (5.9)     | 2216 (94.9)           | 120 (5.1)     |
| 1   | 1733 (95.7)       | 78 (4.3)      | 1727 (95.4)           | 84 (4.6)      |
| 2   | 2163 (96.3)       | 82 (3.7)      | 2163 (96.3)           | 82 (3.7)      |
| 3   | 1476 (95.3)       | 73 (4.7)      | 1477 (95.4)           | 72 (4.6)      |
| 4   | 1800 (95.5)       | 85 (4.5)      | 1811 (96.1)           | 74 (3.9)      |
| 5 or more   | 1618 (92.9)       | 123 (7.1)     | 1645 (94.5)           | 96 (5.5)      |
| <i>Other psychiatric conditions (within one year before or after diagnosis schizophrenia spectrum disorders)</i>      |                   |               |                       |               |
| F40–F48 (neurotic, stress-related and somatoform disorders)   | 1178 (95.4)       | 57 (4.6)      | 1180 (95.5)           | 55 (4.5)      |
| F30–F39 (mood [affective] disorders)  | 2920 (94.3)       | 177 (5.7)     | 2945 (95.1)           | 152 (4.9)     |
| F30 & F31 (mania and bipolar disorders)   | 396 (94.1)        | 25 (5.9)      | 406 (96.4)            | 15 (3.6)      |
| <i>Problem HoNOS (score 2 or over) (within six months before or after diagnosis schizophrenia spectrum disorders)</i> |                   |               |                       |               |
| Agitated behaviour  | 1917 (94.2)       | 118 (5.8)     | 1929 (94.8)           | 106 (5.2)     |
| Self-injury   | 592 (94.3)        | 36 (5.7)      | 590 (93.9)            | 38 (6.1)      |
| Problem drinking drugs  | 1329 (93.7)       | 89 (6.3)      | 1320 (93.1)           | 98 (6.9)      |
| Cognitive problems  | 1715 (93.0)       | 130 (7.0)     | 1734 (94.0)           | 111 (6.0)     |
| Physical illness  | 1856 (87.8)       | 259 (12.2)    | 1890 (89.4)           | 225 (10.6)    |
| Hallucinations  | 4349 (94.9)       | 236 (5.1)     | 4362 (95.1)           | 223 (4.9)     |
| Depressed mood  | 2587 (95.6)       | 120 (4.4)     | 2590 (95.7)           | 117 (4.3)     |
| Relationship problems   | 3209 (94.9)       | 171 (5.1)     | 3220 (95.3)           | 160 (4.7)     |
| Daily living problems   | 2593 (92.5)       | 210 (7.5)     | 2637 (94.1)           | 166 (5.9)     |
| Living conditions problems score  | 1934 (94.9)       | 104 (5.1)     | 1953 (95.8)           | 85 (4.2)      |
| Occupational problems   | 2747 (94.9)       | 147 (5.1)     | 2759 (95.3)           | 135 (4.7)     |
| Mean overall HoNOS score (mean)   | 11.3 (9.4)        | 13.0 (10.8)   | 11.3 (9.5)            | 12.7 (8.9)    |
| Number of missing HoNOS patients  | 2087 (96.3)       | 80 (3.7)      | 2083 (96.1)           | 84 (3.9)      |
| <i>Hospital admissions (within six months before or after diagnosis schizophrenia spectrum disorders)</i>             |                   |               |                       |               |
| Ischaemia + CHD + IHD   | 46 (37.4)         | 77 (62.6)     | 77 (62.6)             | 46 (37.4)     |
| Arrhythmia + AF   | 56 (41.5)         | 79 (58.5)     | 75 (55.6)             | 60 (44.4)     |
| Heart failure   | 7 (18.9)          | 30 (81.1)     | 28 (75.7)             | 9 (24.3)      |
| Diabetes  | 68 (52.7)         | 61 (47.3)     | 84 (65.1)             | 45 (34.9)     |
| Hypotension   | 13 (37.1)         | 22 (62.9)     | 20 (57.1)             | 15 (42.9)     |
| Hypercholesterolemia  | 46 (46.5)         | 53 (53.5)     | 61 (61.6)             | 38 (38.4)     |

Table 1 (continued)

| Characteristics of sample                      | Presence of falls |               | Presence of fractures |               |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
|  | No (n = 10,988)   | Yes (n = 579) | No (n = 11,174)       | Yes (n = 528) |
| Hypertension                                   | 115 (45.3)        | 139 (54.7)    | 149 (58.7)            | 105 (41.3)    |
| Diseases of genitourinary system including UTI | 93 (49.7)         | 94 (50.3)     | 109 (58.3)            | 78 (41.7)     |
| Osteoporosis                                   | 64 (68.1)         | 30 (31.9)     | 23 (24.5)             | 71 (75.5)     |
| Visual disturbance and blindness               | 16 (53.3)         | 14 (46.7)     | 20 (66.7)             | 10 (33.3)     |
| Hearing loss                                   | 12 (46.2)         | 14 (53.8)     | 14 (53.8)             | 12 (46.2)     |
| Syncope or collapse                            | 25 (34.7)         | 47 (65.3)     | 45 (62.5)             | 27 (37.5)     |
| Parkinson's disease                            | 43 (61.4)         | 27 (38.6)     | 53 (75.7)             | 17 (24.3)     |
| Falls before diagnosis                         | 414 (77.7)        | 119 (22.3)    | 434 (81.4)            | 99 (18.6)     |
| Fractures before diagnosis                     | 626 (84.4)        | 116 (15.6)    | 604 (81.4)            | 138 (18.6)    |

### 2.7. Physical comorbidity

Information on physical comorbidities were ascertained utilising the data linkage between CRIS and national HES records. Information on all ICD-10 diagnoses at discharge (primary or any secondary diagnosis codes) for physical comorbidities was ascertained within 6 months before or after diagnosis of Schizophrenia spectrum disorders and the following binary variables generated: i) Ischaemia (I20, I21, I22) + coronary heart disease (CHD) (I25) + Ischaemic heart disease (IHD); ii) Arrhythmia (I44–I49) + atrial fibrillation (AF) (I48); iii) Heart failure (I50); iv) Diabetes (E08, E09, E10, E11, E12, E13; v) Hypotension (I95–99); vi) Hypercholesterolemia (E78); vii) Hypertension (I10–15); viii) Diseases of genitourinary system including urinary tract infections (UTI) (N39); ix) Osteoporosis (M80–85); x) Visual Disturbance and Blindness (H53–54); xi) Hearing Loss (H90–95); xii) Syncope or Collapse (R50–R69); xiii) Parkinson's Disease (G20).

### 2.8. Statistical analysis

The study sample was described initially in terms of demographic and clinical variables, followed by unadjusted Cox proportional hazard models to predict the first fall and first fracture after schizophrenia-spectrum diagnosis separately. The predictor variables at baseline used in the first univariate models included sociodemographic information (year of schizophrenia spectrum disorder diagnosis, mean age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, living status), medications (benzodiazepines, antipsychotics, anxiolytics & hypnotics, antidepressants, analgesics, anticholinergics, antihypertensives), comorbid psychiatric diagnosis (F30–39 mood disorders, F40–48 neurotic/stress disorders), HONOS scores (mean total and each individual item) and physical health comorbidities (as indicated above). Factors that were significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) in the univariate models for fall and fracture outcomes were subsequently entered into the multivariable model. A final multivariable Cox proportional hazards model, using stepwise backward elimination technique where those variables not significant ( $P$  value  $< 0.05$ ) were eliminated, with hazard ratios and 95% confidence intervals (CI), was assembled removing all non-significant variables from the model. Correlation matrix of coefficients of cox model was used investigate collinearity among independent variables and found that number of medications received (polypharmacy) was significantly collinear with individual types of medication received and therefore, polypharmacy variable was removed from final predictors. All analyses were conducted utilising STATA, version 13.

## 3. Results

The analysed cohort comprised 11,174 people with a schizophrenia-spectrum disorder with a mean age of 42.6 years (SD: 16.70) of whom with 43.01% patients were females. During the observation period, 822 of these patients had at least one hospital admission due to a fall or fracture (7.1% of the sample) of whom 579 and 528 were admitted

due to a fall and fracture respectively and 285 patients were admitted to both falls and fractures in this cohort. The incidence rate of falls among schizophrenia-spectrum disorder patients was 12.79 per 1000 person years. The incidence rate of fractures among the cohort was 11.65 per 1000 person years. Table 1 summarises characteristics of those who had a fall or fracture compared to those who did not. Overall, 14 (0.12%) and 28 (0.24%) of patients died due to a fall and fracture respectively based on their death certificate.

### 3.1. Length of hospital stay and mortality

Among the 822 who experienced a fall or fracture, the mean length of hospital stay following a fall ( $n = 579$ ) was 10.83 days (range 0–216) equating to a total of 6270 full days in hospital. The mean length of stay in hospital following a fracture across the sample was 20.20 days (range 0–222) and a total of 10,668 days. This equates to 12.83 years of inpatient hospital stay for 1000-person years of follow-up due to a fall and 23.70 years of inpatient hospital stay for 1000-person years of follow-up due to a fracture.

### 3.2. Factors associated with falls and fractures

Unadjusted predictors of fall/fracture in Cox regression models are summarised in Table 2.

### 3.3. Multivariate predictors of falls

Multivariate models of factors associated with falls are presented in Table 3. In the final model the following remained independent and significant factors associated with falls leading to hospitalisation: older age (HR per 10-year increment, Hazard ratio (HR) 1.49, 95% CI 1.40, 1.58), non-cohabiting marital status (HR 1.34, 95% CI 1.05, 1.71), physical health problems on the HONOS subscale (HR 1.48, 95% CI 1.21, 1.81), and hospitalisations in which the following was recorded as either primary or one of the secondary discharge diagnoses: ischaemic heart disease (HR 1.72, 95% CI 1.26, 2.35), arrhythmia or atrial fibrillation (HR 1.90, 95% CI 1.4, 2.59), diabetes (HR 1.78, 95% CI 1.27, 2.49), hypotension (HR 1.78, 95% CI 1.1, 2.89), hypertension (HR 2.77, 95% CI 2.02, 3.8), diseases of genitourinary system and UTI (HR 1.74, HR 95% CI 1.28, 2.36), visual disturbance or blindness (HR 5.04, 95% CI 2.76, 9.19), syncope (HR 2.12, 95% CI 1.46, 3.08), Parkinson's disease (HR 2.77, 95% CI 1.79, 4.27). Factors associated with a reduced risk of falls comprised non-white ethnicity (HR 0.50, 95% CI 0.4, 0.61) and antihypertensive medication (HR 0.66, 95% CI 0.51, 0.87). There was no interaction between age and gender with a  $P$ -value for Likelihood-ratio test of 0.962.

### 3.4. Multivariate predictors of fractures

Full details of the multivariate predictors of fractures are displayed in Table 4. In the final model, the following factors remained independent and significantly associated with hospitalisation due to fractures:



analgesics (HR: 1.47, 95% CI 1.17, 1.86) and hospitalisations in the primary/secondary discharge diagnoses: hypertension (HR: 2.36, 95% CI 1.65, 3.38), diseases of the genitourinary system and UTIs (HR 1.83, 95% CI 1.29, 2.57), osteoporosis (HR: 6.79, 95% CI 4.71, 9.78), Arrhythmia and atrial fibrillation (HR 1.69, 95% CI 1.19, 2.39), Visual Disturbance and Blindness (HR: 3.10, 95% CI 1.55, 6.21), and previous fracture before psychosis (HR: 2.05, 95% CI 1.53, 2.73). Factors associated with a reduced risk of hospital admission due to fractures included Hypercholesterolemia (HR: 0.63, 95% CI 0.41, 0.96) and non-white ethnicity (HR 0.60, 95% CI 0.48, 0.74).

#### 4. Discussion

The study found that over a 6-year period, approximately 7.1% of people receiving care for schizophrenia-spectrum disorders were admitted to an acute hospital setting due to a fall/fracture, equating to an incidence rate 12.79 per falls 1000 person years and 11.65 fractures per 1000 person years. Of concern, our data indicated that cohort members who had a fall ( $n = 579$ ) spent a total of 6270 days in hospital, whilst those who had a fracture spent ( $n = 528$ ) a total of 10,668 days in hospital. Multivariate models indicated increasing age,

**Table 2**  
Univariate Cox proportional hazard model (95% CI) showing factors affecting time to first fall/fracture hospital admission since diagnosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorders.

| Characteristics  | Outcome falls        |         | Outcome fractures    |         |
|--|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
|  | HR (95% CI)          | P value | HR (95% CI)          | P value |
| <i>Year of first recorded diagnosis</i>  |                      |         |                      |         |
| 2006   | Ref.                 |         | Ref.                 |         |
| 2007   | 0.81 (0.65, 1.01)    | 0.059   | 1.04 (0.82, 1.32)    | 0.747   |
| 2008   | 0.77 (0.59, 1.01)    | 0.059   | 1.1 (0.83, 1.46)     | 0.519   |
| 2009   | 0.75 (0.55, 1.02)    | 0.070   | 1.1 (0.80, 1.51)     | 0.565   |
| 2010   | 1.07 (0.79, 1.45)    | 0.653   | 1.06 (0.75, 1.5)     | 0.747   |
| 2011   | 1.25 (0.87, 1.8)     | 0.236   | 1.19 (0.78, 1.8)     | 0.425   |
| 2012   | 0.83 (0.45, 1.53)    | 0.550   | 1.25 (0.72, 2.16)    | 0.423   |
| 10-year increase in age  | 1.79 (1.72, 1.87)    | <0.001  | 1.54 (1.47, 1.61)    | <0.001  |
| Female gender  | 1.5 (1.28, 1.77)     | <0.001  | 1.34 (1.13, 1.59)    | <0.001  |
| Non-white ethnicity  | 0.34 (0.28, 0.41)    | <0.001  | 0.38 (0.31, 0.46)    | <0.001  |
| Non-cohabiting marital status  | 1.13 (0.92, 1.39)    | 0.242   | 1.13 (0.91, 1.40)    | 0.277   |
| Living alone   | 1.61 (1.35, 1.92)    | <0.001  | 1.55 (1.28, 1.86)    | <0.001  |
| Ten units increase in IMD score  | 0.98 (0.91, 1.06)    | 0.632   | 0.94 (0.87, 1.02)    | 0.152   |
| <i>Medication prescribed (within one year before or after diagnosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorders)</i>       |                      |         |                      |         |
| Benzodiazepines received   | 0.82 (0.68, 0.98)    | 0.029   | 0.85 (0.71, 1.03)    | 0.099   |
| Anticholinergics received  | 0.76 (0.64, 0.89)    | <0.001  | 0.81 (0.68, 0.96)    | 0.016   |
| Antihypertensive received  | 2.86 (2.29, 3.57)    | <0.001  | 2.03 (1.57, 2.64)    | <0.001  |
| Antidepressants received   | 1.21 (1.02, 1.44)    | 0.027   | 1.08 (0.90, 1.3)     | 0.413   |
| Antipsychotics received  | 0.75 (0.63, 0.89)    | 0.001   | 0.76 (0.64, 0.91)    | 0.003   |
| Anxiolytics and hypnotics received   | 0.85 (0.71, 1.01)    | 0.069   | 0.87 (0.72, 1.05)    | 0.146   |
| Analgesics received  | 2.65 (2.18, 3.21)    | <0.001  | 2.42 (1.97, 2.98)    | <0.001  |
| Increase in one type of polypharmacy   | 1.05 (1.00, 1.1)     | 0.037   | 1.03 (0.99, 1.08)    | 0.154   |
| <i>Presence of other psychiatric conditions (within one year before or after schizophrenia spectrum diagnosis)</i> |                      |         |                      |         |
| F40–F48 (neurotic, stress-related and somatoform disorders) present  | 0.88 (0.67, 1.15)    | 0.354   | 0.94 (0.71, 1.24)    | 0.655   |
| F30–F39 (mood [affective] disorders) present   | 1.13 (0.94, 1.34)    | 0.192   | 1.03 (0.85, 1.24)    | 0.758   |
| F30 & F31 (mania and bipolar disorders)  | 1.11 (0.74, 1.66)    | 0.614   | 0.70 (0.42, 1.18)    | 0.180   |
| <i>Problem HoNOS present (within 6 months before or after schizophrenia spectrum diagnosis)</i>                    |                      |         |                      |         |
| Agitated behaviour   | 1.20 (0.98, 1.48)    | 0.077   | 1.22 (0.98, 1.52)    | 0.070   |
| Self-injury  | 1.15 (0.82, 1.61)    | 0.432   | 1.39 (1, 1.94)       | 0.051   |
| Problem drinking drugs   | 1.21 (0.96, 1.52)    | 0.110   | 1.59 (1.27, 1.99)    | <0.001  |
| Cognitive problems   | 1.50 (1.23, 1.84)    | <0.001  | 1.41 (1.14, 1.75)    | 0.002   |
| Physical illness   | 4.04 (3.39, 4.82)    | <0.001  | 3.79 (3.14, 4.56)    | <0.001  |
| Hallucinations   | 1.00 (0.84, 1.2)     | 0.959   | 1.13 (0.94, 1.36)    | 0.191   |
| Depressed mood   | 0.79 (0.65, 0.97)    | 0.026   | 0.90 (0.73, 1.11)    | 0.326   |
| Relationship problems  | 0.92 (0.77, 1.11)    | 0.392   | 0.99 (0.82, 1.2)     | 0.919   |
| Daily living problems  | 1.73 (1.45, 2.07)    | <0.001  | 1.38 (1.14, 1.67)    | 0.001   |
| Living conditions problems   | 0.97 (0.78, 1.2)     | 0.781   | 0.86 (0.68, 1.09)    | 0.219   |
| Occupational problems  | 0.95 (0.78, 1.16)    | 0.623   | 1.00 (0.81, 1.22)    | 0.986   |
| Overall increase in one unit of HoNOS  | 1.02 (1.01, 1.02)    | <0.001  | 1.01 (1.01, 1.02)    | <0.001  |
| <i>Admitted to general hospital (within 6 months before or after schizophrenia spectrum diagnosis)</i>             |                      |         |                      |         |
| Ischaemia + CHD + IHD  | 25.04 (19.63, 31.93) | <0.001  | 12.35 (9.11, 16.73)  | <0.001  |
| Arrhythmia + AF  | 21.00 (16.54, 26.66) | <0.001  | 15.09 (11.52, 19.76) | <0.001  |
| Heart failure  | 25.47 (17.62, 36.82) | <0.001  | 6.31 (3.27, 12.21)   | <0.001  |
| Diabetes   | 18.38 (14.07, 24.02) | <0.001  | 13.23 (9.73, 17.98)  | <0.001  |
| Hypotension  | 25.19 (16.43, 38.62) | <0.001  | 14.81 (8.86, 24.78)  | <0.001  |
| Hypercholesterolemia   | 18.04 (13.58, 23.95) | <0.001  | 12.30 (8.84, 17.12)  | <0.001  |
| Hypertension   | 24.83 (20.46, 30.12) | <0.001  | 17.13 (13.81, 21.26) | <0.001  |
| Diseases of genitourinary system including UTI   | 22.41 (17.92, 28.03) | <0.001  | 18.55 (14.55, 23.64) | <0.001  |
| Osteoporosis   | 10.01 (6.93, 14.47)  | <0.001  | 54.27 (42.04, 70.07) | <0.001  |
| Visual disturbance and blindness   | 18.82 (11.06, 32.02) | <0.001  | 11.01 (5.89, 20.6)   | <0.001  |
| Hearing loss   | 26.12 (15.33, 44.49) | <0.001  | 17.97 (10.12, 31.89) | <0.001  |
| Syncope or collapse  | 23.16 (17.16, 31.25) | <0.001  | 11.92 (8.09, 17.57)  | <0.001  |
| Parkinson's disease  | 13.68 (9.29, 20.16)  | <0.001  | 7.92 (4.88, 12.85)   | <0.001  |
| Falls before schizophrenia spectrum disorder diagnosis   | 7.06 (5.77, 8.64)    | <0.001  | 6.17 (4.95, 7.68)    | <0.001  |
| Fractures before schizophrenia spectrum disorder diagnosis   | 4.19 (3.42, 5.14)    | <0.001  | 6.12 (5.04, 7.44)    | <0.001  |

**Table 3**Two models showing predictors of first fall hospital admission among schizophrenia spectrum disorders (used stepwise removal of factors that were not significant at 0.05 *P* value).

| Characteristics  | Model 1 (n = 9236) |                | Model 2 (n = 9366) |                |
|--|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
|  | HR (95% CI)        | <i>P</i> value | HR (95% CI)        | <i>P</i> value |
| 10-year increase in age  | 1.50 (1.40, 1.60)  | <0.001         | 1.49 (1.40, 1.58)  | <0.001         |
| Female gender  | 0.97 (0.80, 1.18)  | 0.797          |                    |                |
| Non-white ethnicity  | 0.48 (0.39, 0.60)  | <0.001         | 0.50 (0.4, 0.61)   | <0.001         |
| Non-cohabiting marital status  | 1.29 (1.00, 1.66)  | 0.05           | 1.34 (1.05, 1.71)  | 0.025          |
| Living alone   | 1.10 (0.90, 1.35)  | 0.355          |                    |                |
| <i>Medication prescribed (within one year before or after diagnosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorder)</i>        |                    |                |                    |                |
| Anticholinergics received  | 1.21 (0.98, 1.50)  | 0.078          |                    |                |
| Antihypertensive received  | 0.61 (0.46, 0.81)  | <0.001         | 0.66 (0.51, 0.87)  | 0.026          |
| Antidepressants received   | 1.12 (0.91, 1.37)  | 0.289          |                    |                |
| Antipsychotics received  | 0.79 (0.63, 0.99)  | 0.043          | 0.88 (0.73, 1.07)  | 0.183          |
| Analgesics received  | 1.43 (0.114, 1.80) | 0.002          | 1.48 (1.19, 1.85)  | 0.001          |
| <i>Problem HoNOS present (within 6 months before or after schizophrenia spectrum diagnosis)</i>                    |                    |                |                    |                |
| Cognitive problems   | 1.23 (0.98, 1.53)  | 0.073          |                    |                |
| Physical illness   | 1.44 (1.17, 1.78)  | <0.001         | 1.48 (1.21, 1.81)  | <0.001         |
| Depressed mood   | 0.91 (0.73, 1.14)  | 0.415          |                    |                |
| Daily living problems  | 0.95 (0.77, 1.17)  | 0.645          |                    |                |
| <i>Admitted to general hospital (within one year before or after diagnosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorder)</i> |                    |                |                    |                |
| Ischaemia + CHD + IHD  | 1.80 (1.28, 2.55)  | <0.001         | 1.72 (1.26, 2.35)  | <0.001         |
| Arrhythmia + AF  | 1.91 (1.39, 2.63)  | <0.001         | 1.90 (1.4, 2.59)   | <0.001         |
| Heart failure  | 1.29 (0.79, 2.08)  | 0.307          |                    |                |
| Diabetes   | 1.77 (1.24, 2.51)  | <0.001         | 1.78 (1.27, 2.49)  | <0.001         |
| Hypotension  | 1.92 (1.17, 3.14)  | 0.010          | 1.78 (1.1, 2.89)   | 0.007          |
| Hypercholesterolemia   | 0.88 (0.60, 1.28)  | 0.508          |                    |                |
| Hypertension   | 2.79 (1.98, 3.95)  | <0.001         | 2.77 (2.02, 3.8)   | <0.001         |
| Diseases of genitourinary system including UTI   | 1.79 (1.30, 2.47)  | <0.001         | 1.74 (1.28, 2.36)  | <0.001         |
| Osteoporosis   | 1.05 (0.68, 1.62)  | 0.820          |                    |                |
| Visual disturbance and blindness   | 5.01 (2.66, 9.43)  | <0.001         | 5.04 (2.76, 9.19)  | <0.001         |
| Hearing loss   | 1.25 (0.70, 2.23)  | 0.459          |                    |                |
| Syncope or collapse  | 2.01 (1.37, 2.96)  | <0.001         | 2.12 (1.46, 3.08)  | <0.001         |
| Parkinson's disease  | 2.71 (1.72, 4.26)  | <0.001         | 2.77 (1.79, 4.27)  | <0.001         |
| Falls before schizophrenia spectrum disorder diagnosis   | 0.85 (0.62, 1.16)  | 0.306          |                    |                |
| Fractures before schizophrenia spectrum disorder diagnosis   | 1.10 (0.82, 1.50)  | 0.515          |                    |                |

Model 1 includes all significant univariable predictors of falls, whilst model 2 is the final model and includes only significant predictors of falls after removal of non-significant (at  $P < 0.05$  level) predictors.

a history of co-morbid physical illnesses (in particular cardiovascular and metabolic diseases), analgesic use were associated with an increased hazard of hospital admission due to falls and fractures, whilst receipt of antihypertensive medication, and being non-white ethnicity were all associated with a reduced risk. We found no relationship between antipsychotic medication and falls or fractures in the fully adjusted models. Of note, a previous fracture and osteoporosis were strong risk factors for future fractures in the cohort, which is a concern given that a previous meta-analysis found that half of people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders had osteoporosis or osteopenia (Stubbs et al., 2014b). Given that the falls recorded were those that required hospitalisation (i.e. the most severe), the true incidence of actual falls is likely to be much higher.

Our data shed new light on the hospital length of stay burden from people with schizophrenia who experience a fall or fracture. The rate of inpatient hospital stay of 12.79 and 11.65 years per 1000-person years of follow-up due to a fall and fracture respectively is of concern. Little previous information is available on the length and duration of hospital admission due to falls and fractures in schizophrenia spectrum disorders. A previous study considering over 10 million hip fractures in a range of psychiatric conditions (Menendez et al., 2013), established that patients with schizophrenia (0.6% of the sample) spent more time in hospital than (11 days) than any other patient group, including those with dementia, where there has been an increasing body of research attempting to prevent falls and fractures (Bunn et al., 2014; Chan et al., 2015). The authors (Menendez et al., 2013) found that lengthened stay was attributed to the greatly increased number of adverse events such as pneumonia, acute renal failure and deep venous thrombosis compared to those without mental illness.

There is considerable recognition from the general medical literature that the development and prediction of fractures is complex and multifactorial (Kanis, 2002a, 2002b; Kanis et al., 2010, 2013). The risk factors for falls and fractures in people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders are perhaps even more complex/multifactorial and our data attempts to disentangle some of the key risk factors. Specifically, our data suggest that pre-existing comorbid physical health conditions, particularly cardiovascular, metabolic and osteoporosis are associated with future hospital admissions due to falls. An extensive evidence base has demonstrated that people with schizophrenia-spectrum have considerably worse physical health compared to the general population (De Hert et al., 2011a, 2011b; Correll et al., 2015) including diabetes and cardio-metabolic abnormalities (Vancampfort et al., 2015, 2016; Correll et al., 2017) which are known to be key risk factors for fractures (Abdulameer et al., 2012). Despite the poor physical health of people with schizophrenia spectrum, few studies have considered comorbid physical illnesses and falls. To our knowledge, only one study (Tsai et al., 2014) has previously established that diabetes (HR 1.55) and hypertension (HR 1.24) were associated with hip fractures in people with schizophrenia. Our data suggest that arrhythmia and atrial fibrillation, hypertension, genitourinary disease and UTIs, visual disturbance and blindness, and syncope or collapse are associated with an increased longer-term risk of both falls and fractures whilst diabetes, hypotension, Parkinson's disease were associated with falls only. Osteoporosis was a significant risk factor for fractures only. It should clearly be noted that these diagnoses were extracted from those associated with previous hospitalisations (although not necessarily the primary cause of the hospitalisation), and will represent an underestimation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, osteoporosis, a common condition in schizophrenia at a much

**Table 4**

Two models showing predictors of first fracture hospital admission among schizophrenia spectrum disorder patients.

| Characteristics  | Model 1 (n = 9176) |         | Model 2 (n = 9203) |         |
|--|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
|  | HR (95% CI)        | P value | HR (95% CI)        | P value |
| 10-year increase in age  | 1.27 (1.19, 1.36)  | <0.001  | 1.27 (1.19, 1.35)  | <0.001  |
| Female gender  | 0.97 (0.79, 1.2)   | 0.776   |                    |         |
| Non-white ethnicity  | 0.60 (0.48, 0.75)  | <0.001  | 0.60 (0.48, 0.74)  | <0.001  |
| Living alone   | 1.17 (0.95, 1.44)  | 0.147   |                    |         |
| <i>Medication prescribed (within one year before or after diagnosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorder)</i>        |                    |         |                    |         |
| Anticholinergics received  | 1.03 (0.82, 1.28)  | 0.817   |                    |         |
| Antihypertensive received  | 0.79 (0.58, 1.09)  | 0.156   |                    |         |
| Antipsychotics received  | 0.91 (0.72, 1.16)  | 0.456   |                    |         |
| Analgesics received  | 1.51 (1.18, 1.93)  | <0.001  | 1.47 (1.17, 1.86)  | <0.001  |
| <i>Problem HoNOS present (within 6 months before or after schizophrenia spectrum diagnosis)</i>                    |                    |         |                    |         |
| Self-injury  | 1.16 (0.8, 1.67)   | 0.432   |                    |         |
| Problem drinking drugs   | 2.00 (1.56, 2.58)  | <0.001  | 2.17 (1.7, 2.77)   | <0.001  |
| Cognitive problems   | 1.16 (0.91, 1.46)  | 0.224   |                    |         |
| Physical illness   | 1.72 (1.38, 2.15)  | <0.001  | 1.72 (1.38, 2.15)  | <0.001  |
| Daily living problems  | 0.72 (0.58, 0.9)   | 0.004   | 0.77 (0.62, 0.94)  | 0.013   |
| <i>Admitted to general hospital (within one year before or after diagnosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorder)</i> |                    |         |                    |         |
| Ischaemia + CHD + IHD  | 1.31 (0.88, 1.95)  | 0.186   |                    |         |
| Arrhythmia + AF  | 1.67 (1.16, 2.41)  | 0.005   | 1.69 (1.19, 2.39)  | 0.003   |
| Heart failure  | 0.56 (0.27, 1.17)  | 0.124   |                    |         |
| Diabetes   | 1.54 (1.03, 2.32)  | 0.036   | 1.37 (0.92, 2.05)  | 0.117   |
| Hypotension  | 1.34 (0.75, 2.38)  | 0.321   |                    |         |
| Hypercholesterolemia   | 0.59 (0.38, 0.92)  | 0.021   | 0.63 (0.41, 0.96)  | 0.031   |
| Hypertension   | 2.38 (1.64, 3.45)  | <0.001  | 2.36 (1.65, 3.38)  | <0.001  |
| Diseases of genitourinary system including UTI   | 1.93 (1.36, 2.75)  | <0.001  | 1.83 (1.29, 2.57)  | <0.001  |
| Osteoporosis   | 6.92 (4.76, 10.06) | <0.001  | 6.79 (4.71, 9.78)  | <0.001  |
| Visual disturbance and blindness   | 3.13 (1.53, 6.43)  | 0.002   | 3.10 (1.55, 6.21)  | <0.001  |
| Hearing loss   | 1.62 (0.86, 3.07)  | 0.136   |                    |         |
| Syncope or collapse  | 2.25 (1.39, 3.63)  | 0.001   | 2.30 (1.45, 3.67)  | <0.001  |
| Parkinson's disease  | 1.20 (0.67, 2.16)  | 0.538   |                    |         |
| Falls before schizophrenia spectrum disorder diagnosis   | 0.69 (0.49, 0.97)  | 0.034   | 0.80 (0.58, 1.1)   | 0.164   |
| Fractures before schizophrenia spectrum disorder diagnosis   | 1.96 (1.46, 2.64)  | <0.001  | 2.05 (1.53, 2.73)  | <0.001  |

Model 1 includes all significant univariable predictors of fractures, whilst model 2 is the final model and includes only significant predictors of fractures after removal of non-significant (at  $P < 0.05$  level) predictors.

younger age than the general population (Stubbs et al., 2014b), was strongly (HR: 6.79) associated with hospital admission due to fractures. Moreover, a previous fracture was also associated with a future fracture. Despite this, there are, to the best of our knowledge, no interventions that have specifically sought to prevent or manage osteoporosis or fractures in people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders. This is a point of major inequity, especially given that a recent meta-analysis demonstrated that 50% of people with schizophrenia spectrum with a mean age of 44 years had low bone mass (i.e. osteopenia or osteoporosis) according to DEXA scans (Stubbs et al., 2014c).

Interestingly, we found no relationship between antipsychotic medication and falls or fractures in the full adjusted models. The literature to date considering the impact of antipsychotic medication on both bone mineral density and fractures has lacked clarity and has been compounded by failure to consider other important confounders (De Hert et al., 2016). A previous review (Kishimoto et al., 2012) found that whilst 60% of studies suggested that antipsychotic medication, and in particular prolactin-raising medication, was associated with lower bone mineral density, there were inadequacies in the consideration of other risk factors and the studies were hampered by small sample sizes. When considering fractures, some studies have not found that antipsychotic medication is associated with fractures (Bolton et al., 2008) whilst other studies have (Sorensen et al., 2013; Tsai et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2015). A recent study in Canada found that antipsychotic medication (across several psychiatric diagnoses) was an independent predictor of hip fracture above and beyond traditional risk factors considered in the FRAX fracture risk assessment tool (Bolton et al., 2017). The reasons for the inconsistencies are not clear but warrant further investigation. Also of surprise is that in the univariate analysis benzodiazepines were not associated with falls and the precise reasons for this are unclear. In addition, the univariable models

suggested that anticholinergic medication appeared protective of falls, although this disappeared in the multivariable models, suggesting other factors highlighted above are more important. Our data also suggests that analgesics agents may be associated with falls and fractures. In the general population, research has demonstrated that analgesic use (Leveille et al., 2002) and pain (Stubbs et al., 2014a) are associated with falls. A previous meta-analysis demonstrated that a third of people with schizophrenia spectrum had clinical pain (Stubbs et al., 2014d). The underlying relationship between analgesics and increased falls, may in fact be attributed to underlying physical comorbidities, although clearly more work is required to understand these relationships. However, our data was also suggest that antihypertensive medication was associated with reduced falls but not fractures. Finally, non-white ethnicity was associated with a protective effect of falls and fractures in the sample. The reasons for this are unclear and warrant investigation.

The current study adds to the limited data on hospital admission due to falls, which are often a precursor to fractures. A number of physical comorbidities recorded were associated with both falls and fractures, which is in line with the general falls/fracture literature. Much in line with the absence of efforts to improve the bone health and prevent fractures in people with schizophrenia spectrum, there is to the best of our knowledge no interventions that have sought to understand or prevent falls in this population. Given the remarkably poor bone health at young age (50% with low bone mass at 44 years) (Stubbs et al., 2014b), increased fracture and falls risk and the increased adverse consequences which appear more marked than other at risk populations (Menendez et al., 2013), the absence of research attempting to improve bone health and prevent falls and fractures strikes as a major inequity.

Our data have potentially important implications for clinicians and policy makers. The key message is that people with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders should be screened for falls risk, particularly those

who are older, or who have comorbid medical comorbidities (particularly cardiovascular disease). In addition to screening for traditional falls risk factors such as the assessment of gait, balance and mobility, muscle weakness and visual impairments, such an assessment should also include an evaluation of the risk for osteoporosis, a cardiovascular and metabolic examination, a medication review in order to identify people at high risk. Given the reduced bone mineral density among people with schizophrenia-spectrum (De Hert et al., 2016) it is imperative that any falls screening interventions seek to also target improvements in bone health. If a person is identified as being a high risk of falls, multifactorial interventions should include an exercise component under supervision of a physiotherapist, given that exercise was identified as the most consistently effective intervention to prevent falls in older adults (Stubbs et al., 2015a), although clearly research specifically among people with schizophrenia-spectrum is required to establish the best evidence.

Whilst the current data are novel, some important limitations should be noted. First, it was not possible to collect information on pre-fall/fracture mobility, balance and physical performance levels, which are key risk factors for falls (Deandrea et al., 2010). Additional research is required to understand mobility limitations for people with psychosis and specifically if interventions can be developed to reduce these pertinent risk factors. Second, it was not possible to decipher the different types of fracture that occurred during the study. Future research is required to explore this, with a particular emphasis on hip fractures which are associated with particular deleterious outcomes (Menendez et al., 2013). Third, the study relied only on falls and fractures leading a hospital admission, thus it is likely that the figures and predictors for falls in particular may differ and require investigation. Fourth, it was not possible to decipher the potential differential effects of individual antipsychotic agents and their relationship with falls and fractures. Fifth, schizophrenia spectrum is recognised as being heterogeneous and future research should consider how the risk and predictors of falls and fractures may differ on this diagnostic continuum. Finally, we did not have a healthy control group to compare the outcomes and predictors of the study.

## 5. Conclusion

Our data found that over a 6 year period, 7% of a large cohort with schizophrenia spectrum were admitted to hospital due to a fall or fracture. Much in line with the general population, older age, comorbid physical health disorders and some physical health medications are predictors of falls and fractures in people with schizophrenia spectrum disorders. Of note, osteoporosis and a previous fracture were strongly associated with a subsequent fracture. The mean and total length of stay following falls and fractures for people with schizophrenia-spectrum are considerable. Our study investigated falls requiring hospitalisation (i.e. the most severe end of the spectrum) and falls of a less severe nature are almost certainly more common and future research is required to understand this issue. Future bone health promotion interventions targeting reducing falls and fractures are indicated among people with schizophrenia spectrum.

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## Conflict of interest

BS, CM, GP, SS, SEL, DV, JL, SS, AK declares no conflict of interest. RS has received research funding from Roche, Pfizer, Janssen, Lundbeck and GSK outside the submitted work. Outside the submitted work, FG has received honoraria for advisory work and lectures or CME activity support from Roche, BMS, Lundbeck, Otsuka, Janssen and Sunovion, is a collaborator on a NHS Innovations project co-funded by Janssen and has a family member with professional links to Lilly and GSK, including shares.

## Contributors

BS, RS, CM, GP designed the study, acquired the data and conducted the analysis with input from all co-authors. BS wrote the first draft of the manuscript with critical comments from all authors. All authors approved the final version.

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