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The Falls Narrative Study: Writing, Health, and Interdisciplinary Research

The Falls Narrative Study brought together a research team of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students from Department of English and the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at UNC-CH. The purpose of the study was to learn more about how older adults narrate the experience of falling, which is recognized as a serious risk to older adults. While research on falling has historically been framed in terms of objective risk factors, our study privileges the phenomenological experience and broader context of falling in the lives of older adults. We asked older adults to write a story about a fall or near-fall experience after meeting with a pair of health humanities students to tell their story. In this talk, members of the research team will draw on examples from these narratives to address the value-added of storytelling to healthcare and to consider the benefits and challenges of conducting interdisciplinary research.