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Effect of Compliant Flooring on Postural Stability in an Older Adult Population

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OBJECTIVE
- Confirm and extend previous quiet standing findings.
- Examine the effect of compliant flooring on postural stability during more dynamic, functional movements.

HYPOTHESIS
Compliant flooring will display a significant increase (p<0.05) in postural stability as compared to traditional flooring.

METHODS
SUBJECTS
- 10 healthy older adults, 5 male, 5 female, mean age 66.2 ± 4.9 years
- 10 Older Adults with Parkinson’s Disease, 5 male, 5 female, mean age 66.3 ± 4.9 years (Higher Fall Risk: Resting tremor, slow movement, rigidity, postural instability, freezing)

STATIC TESTING PROTOCOL
Two 30 second trials were conducted barefoot on a balance plate while wearing a full body harness:
- Flat Plate (Eyes open and closed)
- SmartCell (Eyes open and closed)
- SooTile (Eyes open and closed)

RESULTS
STATIC OLDER ADULTS VS. ADULTS WITH PD
- No statistically significant differences between groups, although trends showed slightly higher sway in Older Adults with PD as compared to Healthy Older Adults
- Pre-planned post hoc analysis showed significance within groups on flooring

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS
- Compliant flooring may influence postural stability during quiet standing in the A/P direction
- Static posturography showed no statistically significant differences between diseases on the flooring
  - Flooring does not affect one population more than the other
  - High variability observed in individuals with PD, perhaps based on disease severity
  - As compared to healthy, even simple motor tasks (functional movements) can cause an increase in sway in PD
  - The clinical and practical significance is yet to be determined
  - Future work is also needed to determine whether those effects on the compliant flooring that significantly increased postural sway measures are of magnitude that they increase the likelihood an individual sustaining a fall

REFERENCES
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 16 Sept 2011; 20 Jan 2012