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Review

## Neurological gait disorders in elderly people: clinical approach and classification

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### Summary

Gait disorders are common and often devastating companions of ageing, leading to reductions in quality of life and increased mortality. Here, we present a clinically oriented approach to neurological gait disorders in the elderly population. We also draw attention to several exciting scientific developments in this specialty. Our first focus is on the complex and typically multifactorial pathophysiology underlying geriatric gait disorders. An important new insight is the recognition of gait as a complex higher order form of motor behaviour, with prominent and varied effects of mental processes. Another relevant message is that gait disorders are not an unpreventable consequence of ageing, but implicate the presence of underlying diseases that warrant specific diagnostic tests. We next discuss the core clinical features of common geriatric gait disorders and review some bedside tests to assess gait and balance. We conclude by proposing a practical

three-step approach to categorise gait disorders and we present a simplified classification system based on clinical signs and symptoms.



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