## Hnf021714

Health newsfeed for Monday, February 17, 2014

**HEADLINE: WATCH THOSE FALLS** 

ANCHOR LEAD: WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR INCREASING NUMBERS OF SPINAL CORD INJURIES IN OLDER PEOPLE? ELIZABETH TRACEY REPORTS

Spinal cord injuries are on the rise among people aged 65 and older in the United States, research by Shalini Selvarajah and colleagues at Johns Hopkins shows. When people survive such an injury they often need extensive rehabilitation and long term care, and may account for a significant portion of rising medical costs nationally.

SELVARAJAH: What we found was that the overall incidence of traumatic spinal cord injury was not increasing, but when you separated them out the trend in younger adults was fairly stable while the trend in older adults was significantly increasing. When we looked at the mechanism of injury, younger adults were mainly being injured after a road traffic accident while among older adults it was falls, that was actually contributing to the traumatic spinal cord injury. :28

Selvarajah says public health efforts to help elders avoid falls are clearly needed. At Johns Hopkins, I'm Elizabeth Tracey.