

# A few seconds to screen for sarcopenia

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*To the Editor*—I thank Ho et al<sup>1</sup> for their very interesting article “Prevalence of pre-sarcopenia and sarcopenia in Hong Kong Chinese geriatric patients with hip fracture and its correlation with different factors” in the February 2016 issue of the *Hong Kong Medical Journal*. I would like to mention another recent sarcopenia study in elderly Chinese men and women with a mean age of 81 years. The research group led by Hong et al<sup>2</sup> showed that 42% of female patients and 84% of male patients with hip fracture were sarcopenic. In this study, the prevalence of sarcopenia with vertebral fracture was 34% in women and 40% in men. I agree with the authors that screening measures should be implemented more.<sup>1</sup> In a general practice setting, measurement of SARC-F sarcopenia scale is feasible, simple, quick and inexpensive, and does not expose the patient to any particular strain (Table).<sup>3</sup> The scale has also been evaluated in elderly patients in Hong Kong with direct measurement of muscle mass, strength, and physical performance.<sup>4,5</sup> If a SARC-F score of  $\geq 4$  has been measured in an older patient, diagnosis of sarcopenia can be substantiated rather quickly.<sup>3</sup> In my opinion, the SARC-F screen for sarcopenia should be routinely carried out among the Chinese elderly population every time they consult their

doctor.

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TABLE. The Simple “SARC-F” Sarcopenia Questionnaire (0-10 points)<sup>3</sup>

Component	Question	Scoring
Strength	How much difficulty do you have in lifting and carrying 10 pounds?	None = 0 Some = 1 A lot or unable = 2
Assistance in walking	How much difficulty do you have walking across a room?	None = 0 Some = 1 A lot, use aids, or unable = 2
Rise from a chair	How much difficulty do you have transferring from a chair or bed?	None = 0 Some = 1 A lot or unable without help = 2
Climb stairs	How much difficulty do you have climbing a flight of 10 stairs?	None = 0 Some = 1 A lot or unable = 2
Falls	How many times have you fallen in the last year?	None = 0 1-3 falls = 1 4 or more falls = 2