

The term 'Ego-document' is a neologism invented by Dutch Historian Jacob Presser (1899-1970) to describe a text written in the first person singular (I = Ego) that reveals the personal thoughts and feelings of the author. Gerontechnology will use this term for personal anecdotal columns by older adults describing their experience with any type of technology.

FALLING IN DARKNESS

I write about my experiences as an older adult (www.fletchplatt.com). Some time ago I became ill with bronchitis. A month later I was better but was still on medication. One Saturday, about 4 AM, I got up to go to the bathroom and fell with serious injuries. There were many factors involved. This is my analysis of the event.

The event - The power was off and the room was in total darkness. I always use a walker in my apartment. I found my walker at the end of my bed. I did not realize that there was a black-out until I was on my feet. I expected the generator to provide light at any moment. As I

turned the walker around, the leg of the walker caught the leg of a heavy chair, throwing me off balance. I had a slight feeling of vertigo as I fell. The left side of my head hit the arm of an unpadded chair and I landed on the left cheek of my buttocks. I knew I could get up in the bathroom and was surprised when I found I had crawled into the kitchen, by mistake. I was able to get up and went back to bed.

Background - Our community installed an electric generator several years ago. It is tested occasionally and the generator always started within a minute when regular power was lost. I have four flashlights in different rooms for such an emergency but have not kept them in reach since the generator was on line.

Evaluation - Although I was still taking medication for my bronchitis, I do not think it influenced my judgment. I felt secure with my walker in hand. The chair was not directly in my path but was too close for the trip in a blackout.

Injuries - My head was swollen but, as it was a weekend, I did not call for a nurse's help. I saw my doctor three days later and he ordered back and abdomen x-rays. I had a compression fracture of Thoracic bone #12.

Recovery - I am on pain medication for six weeks, but am walking and sitting comfortably, but with great care. After two weeks, my appetite has improved but I sleep about 12 hours a day and find all daily activities are tiring. My mind is working well and short term memory has not changed. I swim four times a week for exercise.

New countermeasures - (i) I have a flashlight on my walker at all times, (ii) We moved the chair to another location, (iii) I have cleared a larger path from my bed to the bathroom, (iv) I have a urinal at the bedside, and (v) My cell phone is within reach at all times.

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... The leg of the walker caught the leg of a heavy chair ...



Resulting damage to my head