The Effects of a Comprehensive Exercise Program on Physical Function, Fatigue, and Mood in Patients With Various Types of Cancer

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Purpose/Objectives: To evaluate the effectiveness of a comprehensive exercise program consisting of low-to-moderate intensity aerobic and resistance exercise two sessions per week over an eight-week period. Participants had significant improvements in physical function, fatigue, and mood.

Methods: Study involved 39 patients with cancer and cancer survivors who voluntarily completed a 16-session comprehensive exercise program. The program consisted of low-to-moderate aerobic and resistance exercise, education, and support twice weekly.

Main Research Variables: Physical function, fatigue, and mood.

Findings: Pre- and postprogram outcome measures had significant differences (p < 0.05). Participants had significant improvements in physical function, fatigue, and mood.

Conclusions: A comprehensive exercise program consisting of low-to-moderate intensity aerobic and resistance exercise, education, and support twice a week for eight weeks results in significant improvements in physical function, fatigue, and mood in patients in active treatment and cancer survivors beyond treatment.

Implications for Nursing: The comprehensive exercise program is feasible for many institutions using current resources and collaborating among departments to mitigate the short- and long-term effects of cancer and its treatments.

Key Points . . .

- Patients with cancer experience many negative side effects, such as fatigue, depression, loss of physical function, weakness, and a decreased quality of life that may last long after treatment has ended.
- Evidence supports the use of exercise to help alleviate side effects of cancer and its treatments.
- Use of a comprehensive exercise program that includes exercise, education, and support may be a useful way to improve physical function, fatigue, and mood in patients with various types of cancer, regardless of stage and treatment status.

Literature Review

Background

Exercise for patients with cancer is becoming widely accepted as therapy for alleviation of side effects and enhanced QOL.

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