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 twice a week for 16 sessions with patients in active treatment and cancer survivors beyond treatment related to improvements in physical function, fatigue, and mood.

**Design:** Retrospective analysis of archived data.

**Setting:** Cancer center in a 350-bed teaching hospital in east central Indiana.

**Sample:** 39 patients with cancer and cancer survivors who voluntarily completed a 16-session comprehensive exercise program.

**Methods:** Physical function, fatigue, and mood were evaluated using the six-minute-walk test, Profile of Mood States questionnaire, and Piper Fatigue Scale questionnaire pre- and postprogram. 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 fatigue and improve quality of life for cancer survivors with a variety of diagnoses and stages.

**Literature Review**

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**Background**

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

**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.

**Purpose/Objectives:**

- To evaluate the effectiveness of a comprehensive exercise program using low-to-moderate intensity aerobic and resistance exercise for patients with various types of cancer, regardless of stage and treatment status.

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