The Impact of Livestrong® at the YMCA for Cancer Survivors

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OBJECTIVES: To determine the clinical significance of pre- and post-exercise rehabilitation physical and psychosocial outcomes of the Livestrong® at the YMCA program.

SAMPLE & SETTING: 158 participants at the YMCA of the Fox Cities in Appleton, Wisconsin, were analyzed for pre- and postparticipation physical outcomes, 68 participants were analyzed for pre- and postparticipation psychosocial outcomes, and 11 participants were interviewed about their experiences.

METHODS & VARIABLES: Participant interviews and statistical analysis of pre- and postparticipation measurements of physical and psychological determinants of health were used to evaluate the effectiveness of this exercise rehabilitation program.

RESULTS: Quantitative data suggest physical measures of strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance, and psychosocial measures of anxiety, fatigue, sleep disturbance, satisfaction with social role, and pain interference were significantly improved post-exercise rehabilitation. Six themes that addressed experiences with Livestrong at the YMCA were qualitatively identified through participant interviews.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: It is crucial for the members of the interprofessional healthcare team to disseminate exercise rehabilitation information to survivors. Equally important is identifying when and how an exercise program will be discussed in the treatment plan. A referral system cue within the current electronic health record could help link local community exercise programs for survivors.

KEYWORDS: cancer; survivors; exercise rehabilitation; quality of life; survivorship

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