

Letter to the Editor

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Cancer and Physiotherapy

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The word “CANCER” continues to be one of the most dreadful contexts today, generating a feeling of concern, stress and especially fear. What can we do about this? The population’s ignorance increases this situation so it is convenient to describe and make people known about the process which happens to a person with cancer in order to be able to face the disease with optimism and hope of healing.

Perhaps, one of the factors to emphasize is the control of symptoms, which remains a worldwide challenge. The oncology population experiences a lot of symptoms such as pain, lack of energy, lack of appetite, constipation, and change in the way of food tastes. Each patient is unique, but it is possible to investigate which are the most prevalent symptoms for each type of cancer so as to understand better how to treat them in a best way. It is a difficult task and although, it is a field that is currently under continuous development which means whenever it becomes more relevant, several authors attribute this difficulty to the absence of validated scales or questionnaires for the quantification of these symptoms.

There are many disciplines that can help to control those symptoms, one of them is the physiotherapy. Physiotherapy focuses on physical therapy and promote healthy lifestyles which help to prevent cancer risk. A negative habit is the sedentary lifestyle that is fought by the physiotherapists establishing a plan of exercise adapted to each type of patient.

On the other hand, due to their high incidence, patients resort to physiotherapy to avoid the most frequent complication in breast cancer: lymphedema. There is much scientific evidence about its effectiveness. It should also be noted that depending on the type of cancer, patients experience different symptoms but the most common is fatigue which will be present to a greater or lesser extent depending on the treatment they are receiving. The literature contains many articles which demonstrate that a physical exercise program is effective for these type of patients. Respiratory physiotherapy also contributes to improve fatigue and stress tests to achieve an earlier recovery in cases of surgery or bedding for a long period of time.

For all of that, it is crucial to highlight the importance of a multidisciplinary team that works for the same purpose: The well-being and quality of life of these patients throughout the process of their illness, in the way that the more we know about the characteristics of each patient, the better we can eradicate or minimize symptoms by ensuring the success of treatment as much as possible. Physiotherapy is a useful treatment filed for this kind of population. The potentiality of physiotherapy should be known in order to help our patients in the different phases of their illness.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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