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Motivation for exercise of cancer patients in Rostock and surrounding area and the necessary environment for physical activities

Motivationslage onkologischer Patienten in Rostock und Umgebung zu sportlicher Aktivität und erforderliche Rahmenbedingungen für Sportangebote

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Introduction: Regular physical activity has been shown to have a positive influence on individual tolerance of cancer treatments. Further, several studies have reported preventive effects of physical activity. These positive effects seem to be associated with the adherence to the exercise interventions and the motivation of patients to be physically active. More than 1000 cancer-related sport groups are active in Germany, whereas only seven of them are located in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV). Currently, no structured professional physical education program focusing on cancer is available in MV. No institutions offer “oncologic training therapies” to provide tailored exercise for cancer patients. In order to eventually provide adequate exercise programs for cancer patients in MV, we have designed a questionnaire that assessed subjective motivation for regular physical activity and subjective needs regarding the exercise environment in these patients.

Methods: This study aims at enrolling more than 150 patients receiving cancer treatment at the University Medical Center of Rostock between 11/2017 and 08/2018. Motivation, sports habits and structural needs for physical training as well as co-morbidities, therapy-related side effects and further patient specific data as sex, age etc. are assessed and recorded by distribution of a questionnaire. Patients are grouped according to sex, age, type of cancer and sports habits. An ANOVA is used to assess differences in motivation for exercise between groups.

Results: Till April 2018 a total of 56 questionnaires were analyzed (35 males, 19 females, 2 without indication of sex). In total 34 pts were willing to participate in physical activity programs (61%). In detail, 84% of the females and 51% of the males stated willingness to participate in physical activity programs. Eleven of the (32%) specified the activity to be realized in a special cancer orientated program. Further a third (13/34; 38%) of the participants specified that they would like to take participate in cancer-unrelated rehabilitation programs while one third preferred (13/34; 38%) to realize their physical activity in general sport groups.

Conclusion: The preliminary results of this ongoing study clearly identify the need for institutionalization of cancer-related exercise programs in MV. Furthermore, female patients appear to be more disposed to become involved in regular physical activity.