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## Impairment-Driven Cancer Rehabilitation: An Essential Component of Quality Care and Survivorship

Recent evidence suggests that more cancer survivors have a reduced health-related quality of life as a result of physical impairments than due to psychological ones. Research has also demonstrated that the majority of cancer survivors will have significant impairments and that these often go undetected and/or untreated, and consequently may result in disability. Furthermore, physical disability is a leading cause of distress in this population.

The scientific literature has shown that rehabilitation improves pain, function, and quality of life in cancer survivors. In fact, rehabilitation efforts can ameliorate physical (including cognitive) impairments at every stage along the course of treatment. This includes prehabilitation before cancer treatment commences and multimodal interdisciplinary rehabilitation during and after acute cancer treatment.

Study by Weaver et al assessed HRQOL in 1822 adults with a history of cancer and 24,804 individuals who had never been diagnosed with cancer. Poor physical health was reported by 24.5% of cancer survivors but by only 10.2% of those without a history of cancer.

The researchers emphasize that it is important to: 1) focus on screening for physical impairments (from mild to severe) as they need to be identified and treated to improve survivors' physical and psychological outcomes measures such as 6minute walk test, 5 times sit to stand, times up & go and 2) refer cancer survivors who have problems amenable to rehabilitation interventions to the appropriate health care professionals who have the expertise to evaluate and treat their physical impairments and maximize functional status.

This article also discusses importance of Identifying Physical & soft tissue impairments in survivors with cancer. These include (but not limited to) pain, fatigue, neurological impairments, bony metastases.

This study focuses on importance of rehabilitation across the care of continuum.

The care continuum includes prehabilitation (interventions designed to increase one's function in anticipation of an upcoming stressor), rehabilitation during acute cancer care, rehabilitation after acute cancer care, and rehabilitation of patients with cancer as a chronic condition (that may or may not ultimately be the cause of their mortality).

## Commentary

This study provides a detailed overall benefit of providing rehabilitation for oncology diagnosis survivors. They also provided case studies for better understanding the importance. It also includes different types of cancer such as they have head & neck, breast cancer references & statistics. Also focus is on working with multidisciplinary team that can offer various treatments is importance as survivors have multiple impairments. It is important to screen for impairments as soon as possible & refer to other services for increased independence & better quality of life in cancer survivors.

Submitted by Gomati Kanphade, PT.