

Exercise reduces fatigue in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy

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Supervised exercise programmes that include high and low intense cardiovascular and resistance training can help reduce fatigue in patients with cancer who are undergoing adjuvant chemotherapy or treatment for advanced disease. The exercise training also improves patients' vitality, muscular strength, aerobic capacity and emotional well-being, according to research published on BMJ.com today.

However, the research also concludes that the mixed high and low intense exercise programme does not improve the overall quality of life for these patients.

An increasing number of [cancer patients](#) are being treated with [chemotherapy](#), either given alone or with surgery and/or radiotherapy. While chemotherapy treatments have improved, patients still suffer from side-effects, including nausea, vomiting, pain, insomnia, appetite loss and fatigue. Surveys show that fatigue is one of the most frequent and burdensome side-effects, says the study.

Lead author, Professor Lis Adamsen from Copenhagen University Hospitals, says this is one of the first studies to examine how a mixed intensity exercise programme affects individuals undergoing chemotherapy.

Two hundred and sixty nine cancer patients took part in the study across two hospitals in Copenhagen, 196 participants were female and 73 were male. The ages ranged from 20 to 65, with an average age of 47. The

study included 21 different diagnoses of cancer.

The exercise training included high and low intensity cardiovascular and resistance training, relaxation and body awareness and massage.

Participants in the study group received nine hours of weekly training for six weeks in addition to conventional care.

Established research criteria were used to rate patients' views at the end of the study. The results show that patients who took part in the study experienced significantly less fatigue than the group who did not undergo exercise training, and even patients with advanced disease could benefit.

Although male patients participated, there was a clear majority of female patients, and [exercise training](#) should be developed with greater appeal to male patients, add the authors.

Despite the failure to improve overall health status, they conclude that "there is a considerable rationale for promoting multimodal exercise interventions to improve physical capacity, vitality, physical and mental well-being and relieving [fatigue](#) during chemotherapy; thereby supporting cancer patients' daily living activities."

Source: British Medical Journal ([news](#) : [web](#))

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