

Qigong can help fight fatigue in prostate cancer survivors

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The flowing movements and meditative exercises of the mind-body activity Qigong may help survivors of prostate cancer to combat fatigue. These are the findings of a trial study led by Dr. Anita Y. Kinney at the University of New Mexico Cancer Center and Dr. Rebecca Campo at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The study took place at the Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah, and was published in Springer's *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*.

Severe fatigue is one of the most common cancer-related symptoms reported by [cancer survivors](#), particularly for [prostate cancer](#) survivors receiving androgen deprivation therapy (ADT). This subjective sense of physical, emotional or cognitive exhaustion may persist for months or years following treatment. It greatly diminishes survivors' quality of life by limiting their ability to perform daily activities and causes significant distress.

Because cancer patients are often advised to participate in physical activity as a nonpharmacological way to manage cancer-related fatigue and levels of distress, senior author Kinney and lead author Campo launched a trial study to determine if the mind-body activity Qigong holds any promise for older cancer survivors in this regard. Qigong is performed at a slow pace, is not overly physically exertive, and can even be performed sitting. It combines slow, flowing movements with coordinated deep breathing and meditative exercises.

Forty participants who suffered from high levels of fatigue were

recruited for a 12-week randomized controlled trial. The group was on average 72 years old. Half of the group took part in Qigong classes, while the other participants attended stretching classes.

Qigong classes seemed to have been more popular with the participants, as its class attendance was higher than that of the stretching group. More importantly though, according to Kinney, "Qigong participants reported significant declines in how much fatigue or distress they experienced, compared to those who participated in the stretching class."

"Qigong may be an effective nonpharmacological intervention for the management of senior prostate cancer survivors' [fatigue](#) and distress," says Campo, who adds that further larger trials would be needed to confirm these benefits in older prostate cancer survivors and in racially and ethnically diverse populations.

More information: Campo, R.A., Kinney, A.Y. et al (2013). Levels of fatigue and distress in senior prostate cancer survivors enrolled in a 12-week randomized controlled trial of Qigong, *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, [DOI: 10.1007/s11764-013-0315-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11764-013-0315-5)

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