

Regular exercise should be part of cancer care for all patients

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	Before chemotherapy		3-6 months after		12 months after	
	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive
Mean global health status ^b	69	65	68	65	67	64
Physical function ^b	90	87	84	79	86	79
Fatigue ^c	28	31	35	41	34	39
Pain ^c	17	30	28	32	28	32

Quality of life scores before and after chemotherapy in active and inactive patients. Credit: European Society for Medical Oncology

Including exercise or sport as part of cancer care can significantly improve symptom management, quality of life and fitness during and after treatment, French researchers have concluded in two presentations to be reported at the ESMO 2018 Congress in Munich. Even among patients at highest risk of poor quality of life, exercise can make a difference.

More than 3,500 patients with [cancer](#) already participate in exercise programmes each year at over 80 cancer centres in France, at a cost of approximately €400 per patient, and the number continues to rise, explained Dr. Thierry Bouillet, Medical Oncologist, Ile de France,

American Hospital of Paris, Neuilly Sur Seine, France, and author of one of the new studies. Classes are run by trainers with specialist knowledge of cancer and its treatment who can adapt exercise programmes to individual needs.

"We have found that patients get the greatest benefit if they exercise two or three times a week for at least an hour during the six months of their chemotherapy or radiotherapy and then for a further six months so that physical activity becomes a part of their life," said Bouillet.

"With 20 years' experience, we have also seen that patients find it easier to exercise in on-site classes and feel more secure than if we give them exercise information and leave them to do it themselves or go to classes away from the hospital with trainers who do not know about the special needs of patients with cancer," added Bouillet.

In one of the French studies to be presented at ESMO, twice-weekly, 60-minute strength training and aerobic exercise classes significantly reduced pain and fatigue scores at 3 and 6 months in 114 patients undergoing cancer treatment, 83% for breast cancer and 21% with metastatic disease. Fatigue scores fell from 3.3 at baseline to 2.8 (p

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