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coACTIF: Real-world reach and effectiveness of virtual group-based multimodal prehabilitation for people with cancer and their caregivers

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Background Multimodal prehabilitation can optimize physical, nutritional, and psychological health in people with cancer, reduce treatment-related side effects, and support recovery; it may also benefit caregivers, who frequently report stress, anxiety, fatigue, reduced functioning and often feel abandoned by the system. We developed coACTIF (COLlectively ACTive and InFormed upon cancer diagnosis), an innovative virtual, group-based multimodal prehabilitation program for patients and caregivers, and present preliminary findings.

Methods This pragmatic, multicentre, hybrid implementation–effectiveness study uses a pre–post design across three hospital centres in Quebec. Patients scheduled for cancer-related surgery in ≥ 2 weeks and their caregivers (if interested) were recruited. Participants completed a virtual fitness assessment with a qualified exercise professional and self-report questionnaires pre (T1) and post (T2) intervention; implementation and effectiveness were assessed using RE-AIM. The intervention comprised supervised synchronous group exercise (3×60 min/week) plus educational content via the coactif.ca website covering physical activity, nutrition, well-being, sleep, motivation, and self-management strategies. Pre–post changes were analyzed using paired Student's *t* tests (or Wilcoxon signed-rank tests) and Cohen's *d*.

Results Overall, 571 referrals were received; 295 (49.1%) were eligible and 116 patients were enrolled (69.8% female), including 20% with a caregiver ($n=23$; 73.9% female), for a total of 139 participants. At abstract submission, most participants had completed pre–post questionnaires ($n=107$) and kinesiology evaluations ($n=109$). Physical function improved based on the 2-min step test from $M(SD)=75.5(22.1)$ to $91.9(20.0)$, $p<0.001$; $d(95\%CI)=0.72(0.58–0.87)$) and the 30-s sit-to-stand test, from $12.6(3.6)$ to $13.6(3.9)$, $p=0.001$; $d(95\%CI)=0.22(0.07–0.36)$). Stress (Perceived Stress Scale) decreased from $15.6(6.5)$ to $14.2(6.0)$, $p=0.029$; $d(95\%CI)=-0.21(-0.37–0.05)$) and self-management capacity (Partners in Health) increased from $6.8(1.1)$ to $7.0(0.9)$, $p=0.005$; $d(95\%CI)=0.21(0.05–0.37)$); fatigue, anxiety and depressive symptoms remained stable.

Conclusion These preliminary results suggest coACTIF may improve physical, mental, and behavioural functioning and could further inform scalable implementation across various oncology settings.

Keywords

Prehabilitation, Patients and caregivers, Pragmatic study, Virtual

Conflict of Interest & Ethical Approval

yes

Abstract submitters declaration

yes

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