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Physical activity before and after radiotherapy. Reports from older patients with cancer

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Introduction: Applying targeted measures to maintain physical activity and thereby function in older patients with cancer requires knowledge about activity level and influencing factors.

Study aim: To describe patient-reported physical activity in older patients with cancer before and after radiotherapy (RT) and explore potential associated factors.

Methods: A cluster-randomised pilot study (Clinicaltrials.gov ID NCT03881137) tested effectiveness of geriatric assessment with management versus conventional care in patients ≥ 65 years, receiving palliative or curative RT. Since no impact on physical function or quality of life was found, the two arms were analysed jointly. Physical activity, defined as last month's weekly frequency of light (not sweaty/out-of-breath) and heavy (sweaty/out-of-breath) activity, as in a Norwegian population survey, was reported at start and 8, 16 and 52 weeks after RT.

Results: Overall, 178 patients participated, mean age 74.1 years, 38.2% women, and 30.9% received palliative RT. Compliance in activity reports dropped from 97.8% to 69.1% (light) and 64.0% (heavy) at week 52. At baseline, nine patients reported no physical activity, 165 (93%) and 86 (48.3%) patients reported light and heavy activity of any duration, respectively, and 27 (15.2%) reported >2 hours of heavy activity. Among respondents at week 8, 16 and 52, the proportions reporting light and heavy activity remained stable, except for decrease in light activity for >2 hours per week from 57.5% [baseline] to 42.3% [52 weeks] and a slight increase in heavy activity for >2 hours from baseline to 24.2, 23.7 and 21.1% at subsequent assessments. Curative RT was associated with higher activity than palliative RT.

Conclusion: About half of patients reported activity consistent with physical exercise (heavy activity), and this proportion was maintained after RT. To further explore trajectories of activity and influencing factors (age, gender, cancer type, treatment intent, frailty status) regression models will be estimated.

NO COI TO DECLARE

Keywords

older, cancer, radiotherapy, physical activity

Conflict of Interest & Ethical Approval

yes

Abstract submitters declaration

yes

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