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CANCER RESEARCH CENTER
IN THE HELMHOLTZ ASSOCIATION

Contribution ID: 383

Type: 1 - Scientific Poster

Education during Breast Cancer Rehabilitation in Exercise Therapy and Physical Activity: A Standardized Educational Module within the German Pension Insurance

Background:

Each year, approximately 39,000 women with a diagnosis of breast cancer participate in oncological rehabilitation in Germany. Within rehabilitation settings of the German Pension Insurance (Deutsche Rentenversicherung, DRV), exercise therapy represents the largest component in terms of both time and structure among all therapeutic interventions. According to the mandatory DRV rehabilitation therapy standards in oncology, at least 75% of all patients are required to receive active exercise therapy. Despite this central role, no standardized educational module specifically delivered by exercise therapists addressing physical activity and exercise therapy had been available to date. To strengthen patients' health literacy, the DRV has developed a structured and evidence based curriculum, in which the present module is now systematically integrated.

Objectives:

This work presents a standardized educational module within the DRV health literacy curriculum that aims to improve exercise-related health competence, promote self-management, and support long-term physical activity in women undergoing breast cancer rehabilitation.

Methods:

The 90-minute module is delivered in group settings and combines theoretical input, interactive discussion, and practical planning. Key components include: (1) evidence-based benefits of physical activity in oncology; (2) principles of structured exercise training using the FITT framework; (3) symptom-oriented training adaptation and safe load regulation; (4) identification of contraindications and effective communication with healthcare providers; and (5) development of individualized action plans using behavior change strategies. The module also introduces structured DRV aftercare programs to ensure continuity.

Results:

The module enhances knowledge, attitudes, and action competence regarding physical activity. Participants learn to adapt exercise to treatment-related side effects, regulate intensity, and utilize DRV-supported after-care services effectively.

Conclusion:

As a standardized component of the DRV curriculum, this module addresses a previous gap and reinforces exercise therapy as a cornerstone of oncological rehabilitation, fostering sustainable physical activity behavior.

Keywords

Exercise therapy, Breast cancer rehabilitation, Physical activity, Health competence

Conflict of Interest & Ethical Approval

yes

Abstract submitters declaration

yes

Author: KLASSEN, Oliver

Co-author: Mr BORN, Lukas

Presenter: KLASSEN, Oliver

Session Classification: Poster Session