

Interplay of strategies for surviving cancer: Physiotherapy, Massage, Walking, Ballet, Swimming, Breathing techniques and Psychotherapy

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Diagnosed with breast cancer during the pandemic of COVID-19, professional ballet dancer and professor with 43 years old had a mastectomy with reconstruction, followed by hormonal treatment (Tamoxifen). Patient had family breast cancer history (mother twice-35y/75y; cousins, greatgrandmother and grandmother's sister). Before diagnosis patient was a high performance athlete with professional ballet performances, swimming, walks and gym.

Between surgeries from February to December 2021 online physiotherapy followed a light protocol on movement recovery (stretches, mobility and strength), breathing exercises, meditation. Walks, ballet classes and teaching were allowed dependent on patient's pain.

Patient performed sensory stimulation in the pectoral, shoulder, scapula, and left upper limb regions, active mobilization of the shoulder girdle, cervical spine, and relaxation of the temporomandibular joints, in addition to lung expansion exercises and stimulation of diaphragmatic breathing. Different textures and temperatures' exercises brought sensorial awareness to the area. The second physiotherapeutic strategy was scapulothoracic gliding stimulation with gain in final ranges of shoulder flexion, dissociation of the scapular and pelvic girdles.

After the 2nd (May) and 3rd (July)surgeries in 2021 the patient returned to work in August with significant pain condition (VAS –6 out of 10), restarting sensory stimuli, and myofascial self-release techniques in the pectorals, teres major, and glenohumeral joint exercises were added.

In October, patient began strength exercises in the rotator cuff, biceps, and triceps brachii, and in a closed kinetic chain, gradually unloading body weight onto the left upper limbs, but the persistent pain caused irritability and fatigue. Patient did laser treatment during 2022, and to in-person myofascial massages from 2021 until today.

Psychotherapy was crucial until today to face the emotional trauma of the cancer.

Limitations in strength, flexibility and pain continues. The patient's ability to dance ballet resumed to 3x, swim 3x, teach ballet 2x and rehearse 3-5x a week.

Keywords

exercise, breast cancer, ballet, swimming

Conflict of Interest & Ethical Approval

yes

Abstract submitters declaration

yes

Authors: Dr DORNELLES DE ALMEIDA, Doris (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS)); Prof. DORNELLES ROSA, Daniela (UFRGS)

Presenter: CANEDO, Adriana (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum)

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