



‘BACK ON TRACK’ – Rehabilitation of YACS

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ABSTRACT

Background:

Young adult cancer survivors (YACS) are a small and understudied group, reporting severe physical and psychosocial late-effects. There is a huge research gap in rehabilitation interventions for YACS

Aim:

To investigate if a complex rehabilitation program would improve YACS' quality of life (QOL), participation and physical activity outcomes and how they would describe their rehabilitation process over time

METHODS

Design:

Mixed methods with a longitudinal convergent parallel design

Participants:

20 YACS, 15 women and 15 men, mean age 31 years (SD 4), with different cancer diagnoses, finished primary cancer treatment in mean 16 (SD 15) months ago

Intervention:

Individual goal setting, physical activity, psychoeducation, peer support and individual follow-up; structured around 3 weeks of inpatient -rehabilitation with 1-week follow-ups after 3 and 6 months

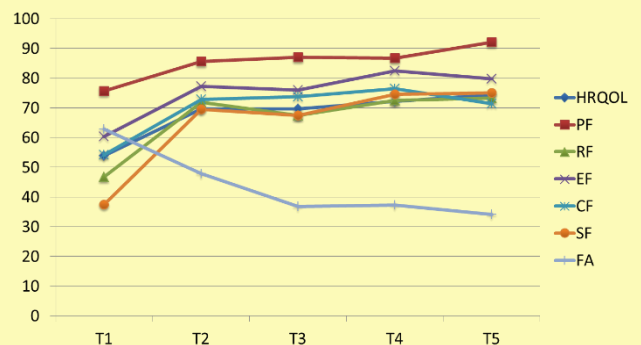
Data collection:

Data were collected simultaneously via questionnaires (EORTC QL C-30, COPM) physical testing and semi-structured in-depth interviews at four separate time points



RESULTS

The quantitative results showed significant goal-achievement ($p < .001$), increased HRQOL ($p < .01$) and physical capacity ($p < 0.01$). Fatigue continued to be a long-term problem



The qualitative results showed that building capacity and finding a balance between the different aspects of life, gaining new insight and the follow-up process were important factors for improvement

"It is the totality; exercising, the knowledge and the discussions...and cognitive therapy ... I have received personal follow-up, although we have been in a group.... Then it is the time at home, it makes you think and you can practice Every time I have made a bit more progress...I have reached my key objectives. I've got more confidence ..But you have to work at it...It takes time." (Tina 32, lymphoma survivor)

CONCLUSIONS

The results portrayed rehabilitation of YACS as a process of gradual improvement in QOL, participation and physical capacity, whereby finding a balance between the different aspects of life, novel insights and multidimensional follow-up were important factors

REFERENCES

- Hauken, M.Aa, Larsen, T.M.B, Holsen, I, Fismen, E: "Back on track" – A mixed-method study on complex rehabilitation of young adult cancer survivors. *Journal of Mixed Methods*. 2015. DOI: 10.1177/1558689817698553

