

Level of physical, leisure, and daily living activities in cancer patients undergoing radiotherapy: which patients will need additional support to restore activity level after end of therapy?

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The aim of this longitudinal study was to describe level of physical, leisure and daily activities during and after radiotherapy, and to identify characteristics associated with not restored activity level one month after end compared to start of therapy. Patients (n=196) undergoing abdominal/pelvic radiotherapy at start, weekly during radiotherapy (median 5 weeks) and at a follow-up four weeks after the end graded their activity level using category-scales. The proportions of patients who decreased activity level between start and end of therapy, and the corresponding proportions who increased activity level between end of therapy and follow-up, were: physical exercising (34%, 36%), walking (26%, 25%), leisure activities (44%, 47%), social interaction (15%, 11%), housework (34%, 29%), shopping (28%, 21%) and activities in general (28%, 38%). Characteristics associated with not restored activity level at follow-up compared to at start (decrease in \geq one activity) were: colon-rectal compared to gynecological/testicular tumors (Relative Risk, RR, 1.5, $p=0.049$), age >65 compared to <65 years (RR 2.8, $p=0.039$), lower education compared to academic education (RR 1.5, $p=0.038$), ability to perform all daily activities at start compared to lower ability (RR 1.4, $p=0.048$), and experiences of anxiety (RR 1.6, $p=0.016$), depressed mood (RR 1.7, $p=0.003$), or low quality of life (QoL) (RR 1.9, $p=0.003$) at follow-up. The conclusions are that activity level decreased during radiotherapy. Activity level re-increased after the end in most patients, but increased more seldom in older, anxious, depressed patients experiencing low QoL, implying that these sub-groups may need additional support to restore their activity level.

Biography

Dr. Anna Enblom completed her Ph.D at Linköping University, Sweden, with a thesis regarding acupuncture for emesis as a side-effect of radiotherapy. After postdoctoral studies at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden, she is currently visiting the University of British Columbia, Canada, as a post-doctoral researcher. Her research area is supportive care in cancer patients and survivors using non-pharmacological therapies, especially acupuncture and physical exercising.