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‘Back on Track’ – A mixed- method study on rehabilitation of young adult cancer survivors

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Background: There is a huge research gap in rehabilitation interventions for young adult cancer survivors (YACS) between 18-35 years.

Methods: Twenty YACS were enrolled in a rehabilitation program structured around three weeks of residential rehabilitation and one-week follow-up visits after three and six months. The program consisted of goal setting, physical activity, psychoeducation, individual follow-ups, peer support and a next of kin weekend. A longitudinal mixed-method approach with a convergent parallel design was adopted, collecting data simultaneously through questionnaires, physical testing and semi-structured interviews at four points, in addition to questionnaires at a one-year follow-up.

Results: The quantitative data showed significant goal –achievement ($p > .05$), increased physical capacity ($p < .05$), HRQOL ($p < .05$) and participation ($p < .001$). The qualitative data elaborated that cancer rehabilitation was perceived as a process promoting coping and control, dependent on finding a balance, new insight and multidimensional follow-up. Fatigue continued to be a long-term problem.

Conclusion: The program’s structure and content seemed feasible, showing high compliance and improved outcomes. Mixed methods provided comprehensive knowledge of the important factors in rehabilitation of YACS.

Key words: Rehabilitation, young adult cancer survivors, mixed methods, quality of life.

Biography

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