THE REHABILITATION AND EXERCISE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN SURVIVORS OF BREAST CANCER

Authors: Bogard, C., Fjosne, M., Rosol, S., Stephenson, B., Strobel, J., Bradt, J., Cheville, A., Hollman, J.
Institution: Mayo Clinic
Mayo IRB approved this study and it is in compliance with the protection of subjects and records of subjects participating in the study.
Funding: Join the Journey

ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose. Breast cancer is a recognized world health problem which impacts the entire person. Previous research has demonstrated rehabilitation and exercise effectively address many of the concerns faced by survivors of breast cancer; however, little is known about the rehabilitation and exercise experiences of these survivors. By better understanding the experiences appropriate intervention and education can be structured. The primary purpose of this study was to describe the lived experiences of female survivors of breast cancer as it relates to rehabilitation and exercise. Secondary aims were to assess the rehabilitation and therapeutic exercise interventions utilized by the participants, their physical function, and their quality of life.

Subjects. Fourteen survivors of breast cancer who had experience with rehabilitation and exercise were recruited.

Methods. A qualitative methodology (phenomenology) was used and data was collected through semi-structured audio-taped interviews.

Results. Seven common themes were identified. These related to exercise behaviors and the influence of cancer diagnosis on them, the importance of education and caring, responsive therapists in rehabilitation, survivor empowerment through rehabilitation, and the importance of exercise for this population.

Discussion and Conclusion. Survivors of breast cancer identified the importance of rehabilitation and exercise in their care; however, many received conflicting advice regarding both and desired more consistent education. These findings suggest rehabilitation and exercise can enhance survivors’ perception of outcomes following breast cancer and consistent education by the entire healthcare team is imperative.