Effect of Exercise on Physical Status of Children with Cancer Receiving Chemotherapy in the National Cancer Institute Egypt

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Abstract

Physical exercise improve prognosis of cancer. In addition exercise for a cancer patient undergoing treatment is essentially the same as exercise for healthy person. The aims of the study were to assess physical status and side-effects of chemotherapy of cancer children receiving chemotherapy, design and implement exercise program for them, and evaluate the effect of exercise on side effects of chemotherapy and the physical status of cancer children. Quasi experimental design was used. A purposeful sample composed from thirty one school age children with cancer admitted to the Pediatric oncology department at the National Cancer Institute, Cairo University. Three tools were used to collect the needed data: questionnaire sheet, observation sheet and patient records. Results showed that more than half of children were boys; the mean age was 8.2+2.9, years. Exercise did affect neither pulse nor respiratory rate, differences between before and after the program were minimal and not proved to be statistically significant. There were significant differences between before and after exercise regarding appetite, nausea, vomiting, activity and pain. On the other hand, difference between before and after exercise regarding fatigue and sleeping hours per day not proved to be statistically significant. The study concluded that children engagement in daily light exercises for short duration improved their physical status and reduced side effects of chemotherapy except fatigue. The study recommends that nursing intervention protocol for children receiving chemotherapy should include regular exercise. Exercise program for children must start from the beginning of treatment and go parallel with it.

Key words: Exercise, physical status, side-effects of chemotherapy, cancer children