

Activity, Sedentary Behavior and Psychosocial Well-being in Cancer Patients: A Review

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Abstract

Cancer diagnosis and treatment profoundly impact patients' physical and psychosocial well-being. Emerging research suggests a critical link between activity levels, sedentary behaviour and psychosocial outcomes in cancer patients. This review synthesizes existing literature on the relationship between activity, sedentary behaviour and psychosocial well-being in cancer patients. The findings highlight the beneficial effects of physical activity on psychosocial outcomes, including reduced anxiety, depression and improved quality of life, while sedentary behaviour is associated with poorer psychosocial functioning. Mechanisms underlying this relationship remain underexplored but may involve physiological, psychological and social pathways. Integrating assessments of activity and sedentary behaviour into routine clinical practice and implementing tailored interventions may optimize psychosocial outcomes and enhance overall well-being for cancer patients. Future research should focus on elucidating the underlying mechanisms and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions targeting activity and sedentary behaviour in improving psychosocial outcomes among cancer patients.

Keywords: Cancer • Sedentary behavior • Psychosocial well-being • Physical activity • Mental health

Introduction

Cancer, a multifaceted disease with physical, emotional and social ramifications, imposes significant challenges on individuals and societies worldwide. While advancements in cancer treatment have improved survival rates, the psychosocial impact of the disease remains profound. Cancer patients often experience a myriad of psychosocial challenges, including anxiety, depression, social isolation and diminished quality of life. In recent years, researchers and healthcare providers have increasingly recognized the importance of addressing not only the physical manifestations of cancer but also the psychological and emotional well-being of patients. Among the various factors influencing psychosocial outcomes in cancer patients, the role of physical activity and sedentary behavior has gained considerable attention. Physical activity has long been recognized for its beneficial effects on overall health, including reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer. Conversely, sedentary behavior, characterized by prolonged sitting or reclining with minimal energy expenditure, has emerged as a risk factor for adverse health outcomes, independent of physical activity levels. Understanding the interplay between activity, sedentary behavior and psychosocial well-being is critical for optimizing cancer care and improving patient outcomes [1].

Literature Review

The relationship between activity, sedentary behavior and psychosocial well-being in cancer patients has been explored in various studies across different cancer types and treatment modalities. A growing body of evidence suggests that higher levels of physical activity are associated with better

psychosocial outcomes, including reduced anxiety, depression and improved quality of life, among cancer patients. Physical activity interventions, ranging from structured exercise programs to simple lifestyle modifications, have shown promise in alleviating cancer-related symptoms and enhancing overall well-being. Conversely, sedentary behavior has been linked to poorer psychosocial functioning and increased psychological distress among cancer patients. Prolonged sitting or reclining time has been associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression and reduced quality of life, independent of physical activity levels. Sedentary behavior may exacerbate psychosocial distress through various mechanisms, including physiological pathways such as increased inflammation and metabolic dysfunction, as well as psychological mechanisms such as rumination and social withdrawal. However, the underlying mechanisms linking activity, sedentary behavior and psychosocial well-being in cancer patients remain incompletely understood. Further research is needed to elucidate the complex interplay between these factors and identify potential mediators and moderators of this relationship. Additionally, interventions targeting both physical activity and sedentary behavior may hold promise in improving psychosocial outcomes among cancer patients, but their efficacy and feasibility in real-world clinical settings require further investigation [2,3].

Discussion

The discussion section delves into the nuanced implications of the findings presented in the literature review. It underscores the intricate relationship between activity, sedentary behavior and psychosocial well-being in cancer patients, highlighting both the potential mechanisms underlying this relationship and its implications for clinical practice and future research. The literature reviewed consistently demonstrates that higher levels of physical activity are associated with improved psychosocial outcomes, including reduced anxiety, depression and enhanced quality of life, among cancer patients. Conversely, sedentary behavior emerges as a risk factor for poorer psychosocial functioning and increased psychological distress. While the precise mechanisms driving these associations remain incompletely understood, potential pathways include physiological mechanisms such as alterations in inflammation, immune function and neurobiology, as well as psychological mechanisms such as self-esteem, social support and coping strategies [4]. However, existing research primarily relies on cross-sectional designs and self-reported measures, which limit causal inference and introduce potential bias. Moving forward, longitudinal studies utilizing objective measures of activity and sedentary behavior are needed to better elucidate the dynamic interplay between

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these factors and psychosocial outcomes in cancer patients. Furthermore, integrating assessments of activity and sedentary behavior into routine clinical practice is paramount, as it allows for the identification of patients at risk of poor psychosocial outcomes and the implementation of targeted interventions to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary time. Multidisciplinary approaches, including exercise therapy, psychosocial support and behavioral counseling, hold promise in optimizing patient outcomes and enhancing overall well-being throughout the cancer trajectory. However, future research should aim to evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of these interventions in real-world clinical settings. By addressing the holistic needs of cancer patients, healthcare providers can contribute to improved psychosocial outcomes and enhanced quality of life in this vulnerable population [5,6].

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature reviewed underscores the intricate relationship between activity, sedentary behavior and psychosocial well-being in cancer patients. Higher levels of physical activity are associated with improved psychosocial outcomes, whereas sedentary behavior is linked to poorer psychosocial functioning. Healthcare providers should prioritize comprehensive assessment and management of both physical and psychosocial aspects of cancer care to optimize patient outcomes and enhance overall quality of life. Future research should continue to explore the underlying mechanisms and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions targeting activity and sedentary behavior in improving psychosocial outcomes among cancer patients. By addressing the holistic needs of individuals living with cancer, healthcare providers can contribute to enhanced well-being and improved treatment outcomes in this vulnerable population.

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Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest by author.

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