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Defining quality of life across the cancer continuum

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Introduction: The QoL paradigm is multidimensional, dynamic and modular, and its definition differs across the cancer continuum. The challenge in the interpretation of QoL data in clinical research is that QoL is influenced by psychological phenomena such as adaptation to illness.

Purpose: This research aims to obtain a valid and sensitive assessment of QoL change over the cancer continuum, and to evaluate a rehabilitation programme aimed at inverting the observed decrease in QoL when patients return to daily living activities.

Design: The sample comprised 66 men. Patients were first assessed to establish a baseline (P1-diagnosis). This was followed by a post-test (P2-discharge) and a then-test measurement (P3-retrospective evaluation) and after returning home patients were randomized in experimental and control groups. The experimental group attended a rehabilitation programme over 24 weeks (P4).

Results: The results show that from baseline to post-test, QoL decreased significantly. The recalibration then-test confirmed a low QoL in all periods evaluated. Significant differences between the experimental and control groups proves the positive effect of the Exercise Rehabilitation Programme (ERP) on QoL.

Conclusions: Understanding the real dynamic of QoL over time would help to adapt rehabilitation programmes by improving sensitivity and efficacy and provide professionals with a more accurate perception of the impact of treatment and side effects on patients' QoL. Our results underline the importance of changing the approach adopted by health professionals towards one of proactive management on patients' QoL until their complete recovery in daily life.

Biography

Bernat-Carles Serdà is a teacher and researcher in the Health Sciences Faculty, (University of Girona, Spain). His research focuses on Quality of Life and chronic malignancies. Nowadays is supervising several thesis using mixing methods in this research field. He has achieved several predoctoral and post-doctoral grants for international academic stays.

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