

Efficacy of Exercise Programme in Management of Cancer Cachexia: A Narrative Review

Rishita Sharma, BPT Student, Department of Physiotherapy, Maharishi Markandeshwar Institute of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.

Lakshay Panchal, Demonstrator, Department of Physiotherapy, Maharishi Markandeshwar Institute of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.

Aditi Popli, Assistant Professor, Department of Physiotherapy, Maharishi Markandeshwar Institute of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.

NAME, ADDRESS, E-MAIL ID OF THE CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Aditi Popli,

Assistant Professor, Department of Physiotherapy, Maharishi Markandeshwar Institute of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.

E-mail: aditi.popli@mmumullana.org

ABSTRACT

Cachexia, a condition marked by significant weight loss, muscle wasting, and systemic inflammation, poses a major challenge for patients with chronic diseases such as cancer, heart failure, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Exercise has the potential to be a low-cost, accessible intervention that improves the physical and mental well-being of cachexia patient, reduces fatigue, enhances immune function, and may reduce the risk of recurrence. Exercise prescription in cachexia care can lead to improve patient outcomes and enhance quality of life. This review evaluates the effectiveness of exercise interventions in addressing cachexia. The various databases including Pedro, Cochrane and PubMed/Medline were examined to explore current literature on the impact of exercise on cancer prevention, management, and survivorship. Research indicates that structured exercise programmes, including resistance training, aerobic exercises, and hybrid approaches, play

a crucial role in counteracting muscle loss, reducing inflammation, and enhancing physical performance. Resistance exercises promote muscle growth and strength by activating anabolic pathways, while aerobic training improves cardiovascular function and supports mitochondrial health. Additionally, exercise reduces systemic inflammation by lowering pro-inflammatory cytokine levels and enhances metabolic processes such as insulin sensitivity and lipid utilisation. Psychological advantages, including diminished depressive symptoms and improved overall quality of life, are also notable benefits of regular physical activity. Given the diverse severity of cachexia and patients' varying energy capacities, individualised exercise plans are essential. Combining exercise with nutritional strategies further amplifies its benefits, underscoring the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to treatment.

Keywords: Exercise Therapy, Health, Muscles, Quality of life.