First results of the PREFERABLE-EFFECT study presented at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in the United States

The first results of the PREFERABLE-EFFECT study, in which EUROPA DONNA – The European Breast Cancer Coalition is a partner, were presented at the "San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium" on December 7, 2023. This study investigated whether an exercise program, supervised by an exercise trainer, has a positive effect on fatigue and quality of life in people diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer.

People diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer often experience symptoms related to the cancer and its treatment. Symptoms may include fatigue and a reduced physical fitness. These complaints affect daily life and, therefore, quality of life. In people whose breast cancer has not spread to other parts of the body, international guidelines recommend physical activity and exercise to help manage symptoms and side-effects. So far, there is limited evidence whether physical exercise can also help people diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. This is what we investigated in the PREFERABLE-EFFECT study.

The PREFERABLE-EFFECT study is an international study involving centers from five European countries (Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands) and Australia. In total, 357 participants were randomly (by chance) divided into two groups. Half of the participants received standard care (control group) and the other half were offered a nine-month exercise program (exercise group). The program consisted of aerobic-, strength- and balance training and was supervised by an exercise trainer. We compared the two groups.

On average, participants were 55 years of age and their metastases were mainly located in the bones (74%). On average, participants only missed few training sessions, which suggests that the training program was manageable for them. The most important result is that participants in the exercise group were less fatigued and reported a better quality of life than participants in the control group. In addition, positive results of the training program were observed for physical fitness and other symptoms such as pain and shortness of breath.

Based on these results, we recommend an exercise program under the guidance of a qualified exercise trainer for people diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer.

These results will soon be submitted to a scientific journal where they will be reviewed by experts. If you would like to stay informed about future results of the PREFERABLE-EFFECT study, keep an eye on our website or twitter account.

Website: https://www.h2020preferable.eu

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