

Adapted Physical Activity in Oncology: The Nursing Role in a Dedicated Care Model with Potential Multicenter Application

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Introduction. Adapted physical activity (APA) is recognized as an effective intervention to improve quality of life and counteract the side effects of cancer therapies. However, the lack of specialized facilities and adherence barriers often limit patient participation. This study aimed to evaluate the psychophysical effects of a structured APA program conducted in the “Palestra Oncologica” at Foligno Hospital, describe the nursing contribution to its implementation, and explore the potential transferability of the model to multicenter settings.

Methods. A prospective observational study was conducted on 15 adult patients with an oncological diagnosis (mean age approximately 60 years). The 8–12-week protocol included aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and mobility exercises. Nursing staff participated in reception, functional assessment, therapeutic education, and clinical monitoring. Pre- and post-intervention assessments included the Six-Minute Walk Test (6MWT), Chair Stand Test (CSST), Timed Up and Go (TUG), FACIT-Fatigue, and EORTC QLQ-C30.

Results. All participants completed the program without drop-outs. Improvements were observed in muscle strength (+27% in CSST), endurance (+10% in 6MWT), agility, and perceived fatigue, with a 40% improvement in the FACIT-Fatigue score. Participants also reported improved overall health status. Nursing integration supported adherence and the safe management of potential clinical criticalities.

Discussion. APA delivered in a dedicated oncology setting with active nursing support appears feasible and associated with improvements in physical performance, fatigue, and perceived health status. The nursing role may contribute to patient safety, therapeutic education, empowerment, and adherence. The standardized structure of the intervention and assessment tools supports its potential application in future multicenter studies.

Keywords: Adapted Physical Activity, Oncology Nursing, Cancer-Related Fatigue

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