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Table of Contents

Muscle soreness and fatigue and their associations with internal and external load measures in professional soccer players	1181
Internal and external training load associations in professional soccer players	1185
Comparison of motivational factors for the practice of exercise at gyms and nature and adventure sports	1189
Association of physical activity, self-concept and self-efficacy in high school students	1193
Effect of the Internet and online social media on awareness of ACSM physical activity recommendations	1197
Physical activity level and perceptions about exercise in patients with Osteoporosis	1201
Parental perceptions of physical activity benefits for children with autism spectrum disorders ...	1205
Relationship of intrinsic motivation towards sport, with variables related to a healthy lifestyle....	1209
Differences between gender and population groups, motivational variables and healthy lifestyles	1213
Short-term effects of myofascial release on isometric knee extensors strength	1217
Iron, phosphorus and magnesium erythrocyte concentrations in men with a high, moderate or low level of physical training	1221
Possible relationship between some trace metals and the hormone insulin in high-level athletes	1225
Erythrocyte concentrations of chromium, manganese and zinc in men with a high, moderate or low level of physical training	1228

In-season internal training load quantification of an under-17 European male soccer team: Starters versus Non-starters	1518
Pre-season and in-season internal training load quantification of one-week schedules in under-17 European soccer team	1522
Bullying among medical students: Integrative literature review	1526
Perceived motivational climate and goal orientation in soccer athletes: A longitudinal perspective	1529
Bullying victimization and family interactions of Brazilian students: A mixed study	1533
Habitual physical activity patterns of pre-school children from Bragança	1537
The (In)discipline: Playtherapy as prevention	1541
Students' opinion on Physical Education and School: An association with academic performance	1545
The curricular identity of Physical Education: New perspective.....	1548
The effect of combining general warm-up with specific warm-up in bench press performance	1552
The importance of workplace health management in the context of skills shortage in small and medium-sized companies	1556
Case study of the programs for soccer teaching of two teachers in training versus the Tactical Game Approach model	1559
Social and personal skills in Physical Education: teachers and students' preception about an intervention program.....	1563
Is VO₂ kinetics influenced by swimming intensity in maximal and supramaximal velocities in young female swimmers?	1566
Training and leadership profile in adapted sport coaches and the implication in athletes with intellectual disabilities	1570
Adapted sports: An experience for initial skills development of sport professionals	1574
Perceived barriers and physical activity levels in older adults: The role of education	1578
Supervised vs. non-supervised physical activity: The impact on functional fitness in older adults	1582
Playfulness in education: A systematic review	1586
The 2019 Special Olympics World Games experience: Perspective of athletes who participated ..	1590
The importance of sports to the Inclusive Research Group of APPACDM Castelo Branco.....	1593
Adapted sports: Curricular traineeship	1596
The observation: Adapted table tennis.....	1600
Changing elderlies strength levels with a four months multicomponent training program	1604
Bone mineral density and muscle strenght in elderly: A cross-sectional study	1608
Effects of a multicomponent exercise program with duration of 12 weeks on the quality of life in breast cancer survivors	1612

Effects of a multicomponent exercise program with duration of 12 weeks on the quality of life in breast cancer survivors

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to verify the changes induced by the multicomponent exercise program with duration of 12 weeks on quality of life in breast cancer survivors. The sample of this study consisted of 7 female subjects with an average of 64 (± 8.6) years who volunteered for this investigation and presented breast cancer pathology diagnosed in the clinical history. The exercise program had a duration of 12 consecutive weeks and a weekly frequency of three days. The duration of the exercise was 60 continuous minutes and the exercise used were from the multicomponent method, combining aerobic, resistance, flexibility and balance training. The variables of healthy-related quality of life questionnaire EORTC QLQ-C30 and QLQ-BR23 were evaluated on the baseline and after 12 weeks. The data followed a descriptive and statistical analysis related to the results obtained in the various subscales of the EORTC QLQ-C30 and QLQ-BR23 on the baseline and 12 weeks. From baseline to 12 weeks, the most increased values were 24 (± 16.5) points in the role function; 11 (± 5.3) in the emotional function. In the symptomatic scales, the most improved symptoms were fatigue with a reduction of 20 (± 3.5) points; 14 (± 3.8) in the pain scale, 16 (± 4.8) on breast symptoms, and 19 (± 10.9) points on arm symptoms. The results suggest that the multicomponent exercise program in this study didn't have significant differences on the health-related quality of life subscales in breast cancer survivors. **Keywords:** Breast cancer; Quality of life; Exercise.

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INTRODUCTION

The classification of "cancer survivor" indicates any person who had or has cancer from the time of diagnosis (Marzorati et al., 2017). The treatment is essentially centred on the objective of curing the disease and in the prevention of its metastatic reappearance (Devin et al., 2019). This evidence emphasizes the importance of research on the development of strategies to improve quality of life, reduce the risk of recurrence, probability of contracting other diseases and prolong the survival of this population (Lee et al., 2016).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Initial assessments were performed in January 2019, and the post-intervention evaluation was performed in April 2019. Inclusion criteria were: 1) be diagnosed as breast cancer patients; 2) designated for definitive surgery (any type); 3) designated for chemotherapy, radiotherapy, hormonal therapy, or a combination of these treatments after surgery.

Participants

The sample of this study consisted of 7 female subjects. The volunteers had an average of 64 (± 8.6) years.

Measures

The assessment of quality of life related to Health was performed using the third version of the questionnaire of the European Organization Research Treatment of Cancer, Quality of life of the patient with cancer (EORTC QLQ-C30) and breast cancer (QLQ-BR23) (Aaronson et al., 1993).

Procedures

The subjects that volunteered for this investigation presented breast cancer pathology diagnosed in the clinical history. The questionnaires were submitted on the baseline and after 12 weeks by the investigators in the facilities of Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal. The sessions of 60 minutes were constituted by: 1) 5-8 minutes of general warming, 2) aerobic exercises (15-20 min); 3) 1 to 3 series of muscular endurance exercises involving the main muscular groups, such as knee flexors/extensors, abductors and adductors of the shoulder, elbow flexors/extensors; 4) Static and dynamic balance training for 5-8 min; 5) 5 min of return to the calm. The intensity was maintained in 12-14 on the scale of subjective perception of Borg exertion (1998).

Analysis

The data followed a descriptive and statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 23.

RESULTS

From baseline to 12 weeks, the most increased values were 24 (± 16.5) points in the role function; 11 (± 5.3) in the emotional function. In the symptomatic scales, the most improved symptoms were fatigue with a reduction of 20 (± 3.5) points; 14 (± 3.8) in the pain scale, 16 (± 4.8) on breast symptoms, and 19 (± 10.9) points on arm symptoms. However, we didn't found significant differences on the variables of this study.

Table 1. Baseline and 12 weeks health-related quality of life subscales (EORTC QLQ-C30/BR23) of breast cancer survivors

Variables QLQ-C30	Baseline (n=7) M (±SD)	12 weeks (n=7) M (±SD)	U	P
Global Health Status (QOL)	60.71 (±17.8)	57.1 (± 11.1)	20.500	0.620
Physical Function (PF)	83.8 (± 9.3)	84.7 (± 11.9)	29.500	0.535
Role Function (RF)	59.5 (± 33.1)	83.3 (± 16.6)	35.500	0.165
Emotional Function (EF)	67.8 (± 23.2)	78.5 (± 17.9)	31.000	0.456
Cognitive Function (CF)	76.1 (± 18.8)	80.9 (± 11.5)	29.000	0.620
Social Function (SF)	83.2 (± 21.6)	71.3 (± 34.3)	20.000	0.620
Fatigue (FA)	46 (± 24.3)	26.9 (± 27.8)	14.500	0.209
Pain (PA)	46.2 (± 24.4)	32.1 (± 28.2)	17.000	0.383
Variables QLQ-BR23				
Breast Symptoms (BRBS)	23.8 (± 17.9)	7.14 (± 13.1)	9.500	0.053
Arm Symptoms (BRAS)	32.9 (± 27.6)	13.88 (± 16.7)	13.500	0.165

DISCUSSION

The variables related to quality of life improved after the intervention of the exercise. These results are consistent with Naumann et al. (2012), who reported an increase of more than 10 points in the variables of quality of life, in breast cancer survivors, after 9 weeks of exercise. In the present study, the exercise induced a marked decrease in the symptoms of fatigue and pain, which is in line with the results of the literature, stating that exercise can help reduce fatigue during and after the treatments (Naumann et al., 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the present study suggest that supervised multicomponent exercise program for 12 weeks didn't have significant differences on the health-related quality of life subscales in breast cancer survivors.

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