

Physiotherapy in women after breast cancer treatment – review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Breast cancer is the most common malignant tumor in women in the Polish region. Surgery is a basic method of breast cancer treatment. Surgery often carries a lot of unwanted changes as follows: limitation of mobility in the shoulder joint on the operated side, secondary lymphoedema, post mastectomy pain syndrome (PMPS), reduction of muscle strength or disorders in body posture. Therefore, the implementation of physiotherapeutic activities that are designed to prevent and eliminate postoperative complications seems very important. The main aim of this work was to present physiotherapeutic management in women after mastectomy based on the analysis of available literature. The physiotherapeutic process can be divided into three periods: early hospital, early ambulatory and the late ambulatory period. In the first period, active slow exercises, self-support of the upper limb on the operated side and breathing exercises on the thoracic track are used to prevent circulatory disorders, pulmonary complications, and edema. The early ambulatory period includes corrective exercises, general improvement exercises,

stretching and learning of automatic massage of the upper limb of the operated side. The last period should be enriched by recreational methods of physical activity such as swimming, cycling or Nordic walking to maintain physical fitness, proper mobility of the shoulder girdle and improve the patient's psychophysical state. It is very important the patient regular continues the rehabilitation program after curing of breast cancer as well. In the case of secondary lymphoedema of the upper limb, comprehensive rehabilitation physiotherapy is used, consisting of manual lymphatic drainage, healing exercises, compression therapy, and skin care.

Conclusions: Physiotherapy in women after breast cancer surgery is a complex and long-term process. Physiotherapeutic methods are effective in treating complications after surgery of breast cancer surgery. It is necessary to constantly update the physiotherapy knowledge in women after breast cancer surgery.

Keywords: breast cancer, rehabilitation, mastectomy, physiotherapy

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