

Media Release

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Physical activity link to breast cancer recovery

MELBOURNE: Physical activity in breast cancer survivors has been found to be important in reducing the risk of breast cancer recurrence and improving quality of life, according to new research to be released today (9/11).

Researchers from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, will release preliminary results today of research based on a structured physical activity program, to the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia's Annual Scientific Meeting.

Principal Investigator, Annabel Pollard, said physical activity levels declined during treatment and most breast cancer survivors did not engage in physical activity at recommended levels.

"Enabling cancer survivors to recover or improve their health after cancer treatment is perhaps as important as treating the disease," Ms Pollard said. "Cancer survivors are often motivated to have a healthier lifestyle, but many do not carry out their good intentions."

Staff at Peter Mac have developed a program which, on preliminary testing, shows promise for increasing physical activity and improving quality of life in breast cancer survivors over 12 weeks.

Ms Pollard said the results of the pilot study suggested that, compared to women who receive usual care, successful lifestyle change after breast cancer was more likely in women who received a targeted structured intervention that aimed to increase physical activity behaviours. "The research indicates that simply providing information alone does not change behaviour; a structured approach is more conducive to change.

"While still part of a pilot study, these results reveal that we need to facilitate better ways of supporting women in the recovery process. There is value in incorporating cancer rehabilitation interventions as part of the continuum of treatment and care."

Clinical Oncological Society of Australia President, Professor Bruce Mann, said health professionals needed to motivate and support their patients to make lifestyle changes that could reduce the risk of recurrence.

"Rehabilitation after breast cancer is a challenging process for patients and their families," Professor Mann said. "Physical activity is not usually high on the list of priorities for patients, but we should be encouraging and supporting them to undertake structured programs."

[Ms Pollard will present her research at 4pm today \(Nov 9\) at the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia Annual Scientific Meeting. Room 211, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.](#)

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