

# Physical Activity, Exercise and Cancer (PAEC) and the holistic approach to health for cancer patients/survivors

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Dear Editor:

## **Physical activity: The cornerstone of healthy habits**

Physical Activity (PA) is not only the cornerstone of healthy lifestyle behaviours (Dhuli, et al., 2022) for cancer patients/survivors – physical activity is the magic bull in this field that protects humans from cancer and other non-communicable diseases (NCD's) and guides them into a healthy future.

While the first editorial from our colleague Dra. Soraya Casla Barrio highlighted the importance of the different types of physical activity, I will now highlight the influence of physical activity on healthy lifestyle behaviours in general.

One thing is clear: Cancer patients/survivors have almost the same needs as healthy people (WHO, 2020) depending on the age group when it comes to healthy habits. The key to healthy habits is regular physical activity. The major challenge is how to get cancer patients/survivors physically active?

Physically active humans typically also have healthier dietary choices (Fernandes, et al., 2023) among other positive lifestyle behaviours. They are aware of these positive habits and experience a sense of balance in both physical and mental well-being through their physical activity.

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### **The parallel treatment plan**

Wouldn't it be great if we could join forces to establish a parallel treatment plan (Gokal, et al., 2024) integrating physical activity alongside medical treatment for cancer patients/survivors? A mandatory plan that guides patients toward a healthier future.

### **ESMO guidelines for physical activity**

*"Despite the recognition in ESMO Guidelines (ESMO, 2018), lifestyle changes like physical activity are not thoroughly embedded in standard cancer treatment protocols. This gap undermines potential enhancements in patient health and treatment effectiveness. Studies have consistently shown that incorporating physical activity into cancer care not only improves treatment outcomes but also significantly boosts quality of life."*  
Ph.D. Rūdolfs Cešeiko, Exercise Physiologist, Rīga Stradiņš University, OAC Exercise Expert & Advisor. (OAC, 2024).

### **Sport for all**

Dr. Tom Degenhardt, Medical Doctor, M.Sc., General Practitioner & Gynecologist, and OAC Medical Director, called for "Sports for All: Cancer patients/survivors on prescription" during this year's Digestive Cancers Europe (DiCE) Masterclass Session 5: Physical Activity for Prevention and Preservation at ESMO in Munich (DiCE, 2024).

*Is it a distant dream or a near-future reality?*

**Keywords:** Physical exercise, Physical activity, Exercise, Cancer, Cancer prevention, Cancer treatments, Cancer survivors, Psychology, Sport medicine.

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