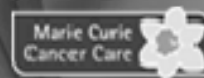


A physical exercise programme for  
palliative care patients in a clinical  
setting: Observations and preliminary  
findings

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Physiotherapist



Why?



Why?

Why rehabilitate in palliative care?

Why promote exercise in palliative care?

Marie Curie Cancer Care

## Background

- Loss of physical function and increased dependency have significant negative impact on the quality of life of the terminally ill
- Evidence that exercise & rehabilitation can:
  - Reduce fatigue
  - Improve quality of life
  - Improve physical performance
- Evidence that palliative patients are interested in participating





## The programme

- Initial in-depth assessment
- Individualised programme devised and agreed with patient
- 10 weekly gym sessions:
  - Warm up
  - Cardiovascular exercises
  - Strengthening exercises
  - Balance exercises
  - Cool down and stretching



## Borg Perceived Rate of Exertion Scale (PRE)

6		
7	Extremely Light	
8		
9	Very Light	
10		
11	Fairly Light	
12		
13	Somewhat Hard	} Target range
14		
15	Hard	
16		
17	Very Hard	
18		
19	Extremely Hard	
20	Maximum Effort	



## Home based programme

- Strengthening exercises and walking
- Target:
  - “...at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity a week and muscle strengthening targeting all the major muscle groups on 2 or more days of the week”

ACSM and DOH 2010

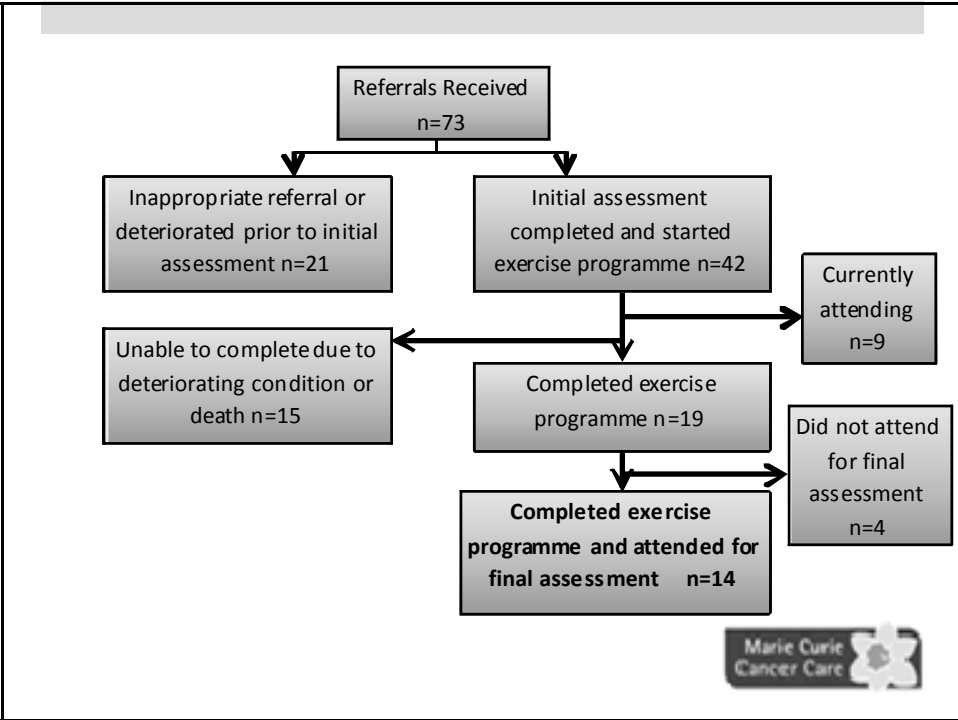


## Evaluation Design

- Outcome measures administered at the initial assessment and on discharge from the exercise programme
  - Timed repetitive sit – stand
  - 6 minute walk test
  - FACIT – Fatigue
  - McGill QoL questionnaire



# Results



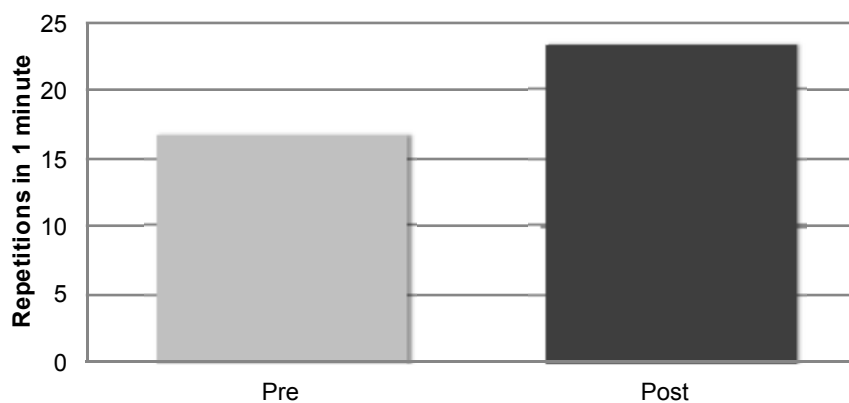
## Participants characteristics

	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	12	85.7
Female	2	14.3
Primary Diagnosis		
Cancer*	7	50.0
Myeloma	3	14.3
Lymphoma	2	21.4
Multiple Sclerosis	1	7.1
MND	1	7.1

\* Oesophageal (1) Kidney (1) Breast (1) Colon (1) Brain (2) Head & Neck (1)



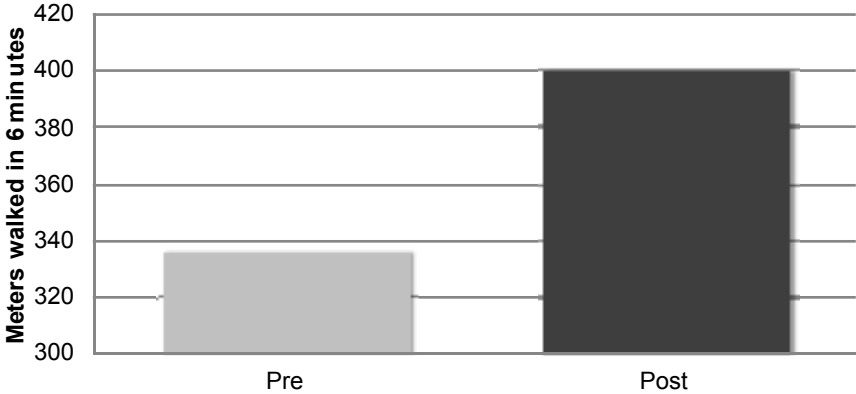
## Timed repetitive Sit – Stand



Statistically significant change in score post programme  
 $p < 0.05$



# 6 minute walk test

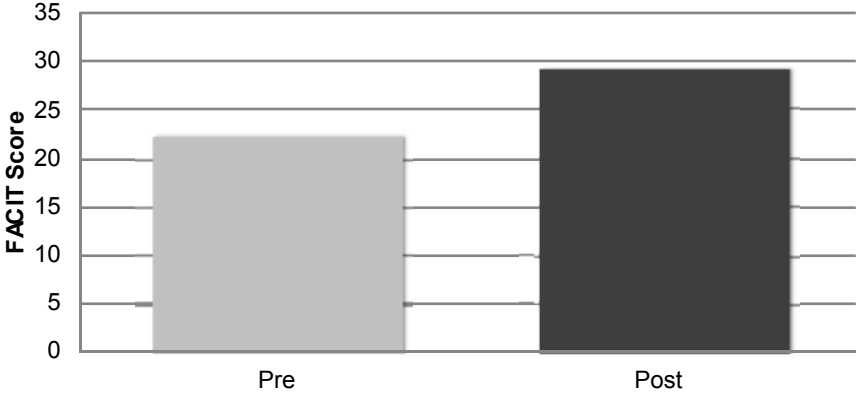


Statistically significant change in score post programme  
 $p < 0.05$



# FACIT - Fatigue

Higher FACIT score indicates lesser fatigue (maximum score: 52)

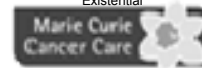
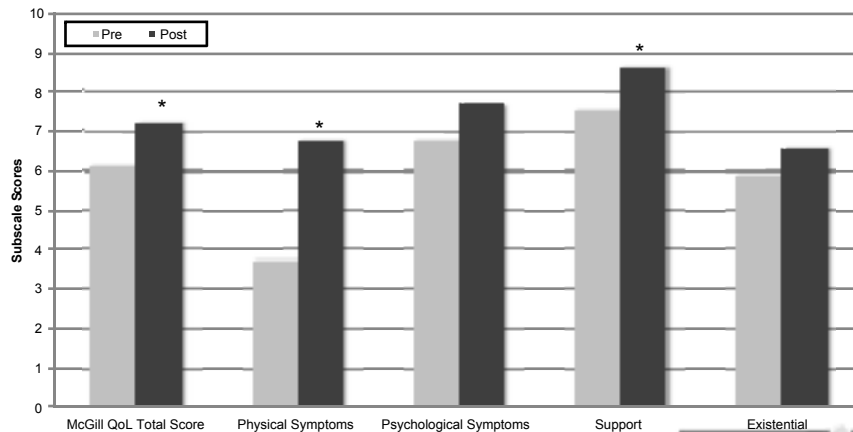


Statistically significant change in score post programme  
 $p < 0.05$





## McGill QoL Questionnaire



## Positive patient feedback

“I gained in confidence and self-esteem”

“I cant believe how much I am able to do now”

“I feel I have got my life back... Thank you”



## Conclusions

- The results contribute to the growing evidence that structured exercise programmes can improve physical functioning and quality of life, while reducing fatigue among patients receiving palliative care.



## Key Challenges

- High proportion of patients who completed baseline assessment were lost to follow-up (45%)
- While a higher level of attrition is inevitable in this population, patients may benefit from earlier referral to such services to allow realisation of maximum benefit from the effects of physical exercise.



## What Next?

- We are continuing to develop the service
- Planning a re-launch & marketing campaign
- EDUCATION
  - Improve patient and health care professionals understanding and knowledge on the potential benefits of rehabilitation in palliative care
  - Raise awareness
  - Promote early referral



## Full article publication

McGrillen K. and McCorry N. K.

(In press). A Physical Exercise Program for Palliative Care Patients in a Clinical Setting: Observations and preliminary findings. Progress in Palliative Care.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1179/1743291X14Y.0000000091>



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