

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

CLINICAL NEWS TO USE

If you're looking for a baseline standard-of-care exercise program for your post-breast cancer lymphedema patients, you're in luck. A new study could provide just that for the estimated 20 percent of patients with breast cancer who develop breast cancer-related lymphedema (BCRL), according to a press release from the American Occupational Therapy Association. The research, conducted by University of Pittsburgh, revealed that the Breast Cancer Recovery Program© (BCRP) could work as a model exercise program in treating BCRL.

In a study of 32 women with BCRL, researchers found that the BCRP significantly reduced swelling caused by arm lymphedema, increased arm and shoulder movement, promoted weight loss, and improved both mood and quality of life.

"This is the first evidence-based, controlled study to demonstrate swelling reduction in the affected arm through exercise and relaxation in individuals with BCRL," said **Marjorie K. McClure, OTR/L, CLT-LANA**, Irene McLenahan young investigator at the Magee-Womens Research Institute in Pittsburgh. "The role of occupational therapy as it pertains to cancer intervention is to improve the quality of the patient's life, however they see it," she added.

The exercise group participants attended 10 one-hour, biweekly sessions for five weeks, followed by a three-month self-monitored home program period, according to the release. Each structured session included participation with the video, "From Lymphedema Onto Wellness" (FLOW©). Also, during each session, therapists gave verbal instructions with accompanying written educational material, along with coping and relaxation techniques. In addition, each session concluded with a Q&A component and group discussion. Finally, therapists instructed participants to complete the FLOW© video and relaxation techniques at home daily.

Patients may complete the techniques in standing, seated, or lying positions, according to the release. Also, the individual can use the visual images and storyline from the program video without exercise for the purpose of emotional goals.

Another perk: Patients can use the BCRP for long- or short-term goals, according to the research.