

Cancer Related Fatigue

Cancer related fatigue is a significant and debilitating symptom for patients with cancer. Prevalence estimates vary from 60 to 90%, with severity increasing as cancer progresses. Cancer related fatigue is often not reported and undertreated. Cancer related fatigue has profound effects on a person's ability to function in usual roles and activities.

Although the problem of CRF has been well described, limited knowledge exists on how to effectively manage this symptom.

The principles of managing cancer related fatigue as taught by Occupational Therapist can include:

- Teaching individuals to establish an activity programme of activity and rest. With the aim of achieving individuals how to achieve an activity baseline, “a comfortable level of activity that can be managed on a regular basis without experiencing an increase in symptoms”. Thereby breaking the often reported pattern of “Peaks and troughs”
- Provide education in the principles and practice of graded activity and appropriate reintroduction of activity. Teaching strategies such as task analysis, simplification, pacing, delegation, planning, appropriate use of daily living equipment and realistic goal setting.
- Providing education in rest and relaxation techniques.

By teaching these strategies in a group or individual session it is aimed to empower the patient to become effective in their own management of this symptom.

How effective are such principles and techniques in the management of cancer related fatigue?