Cancer is the leading cause of mortality worldwide, including in Korea, and mortality continues to increase with the progress of a super-aged society. A support or care system to reduce psychological issues, such as anxiety and depression, is very important during cancer patient treatment, and this can be achieved by exercise. In addition, exercise can alleviate cancer treatment side effects, improve patients’ functional status, lead to better outcomes after surgery, build baseline strength to endure treatments, and prevent recurrence. The relationship between cancer and exercise is still being debated; however, many studies have shown that regular physical activity prevents cancer occurrence and reduces the risk of recurrence and death [1]. Also, those with greater physical activity showed lower risk for 13 types of cancer [2], and several cases of certain common cancers had a lower mortality rate [3]. Some researchers found that the degree of physical activity in colorectal or breast cancer patients had a significant association with risk and incidence rate [4]. These findings suggest that physical activity or exercise can have a strong positive effect on the health of cancer patients and survivors.

Despite the benefits of exercise for such patients, cancer survivors living at least five years after cancer diagnosis still cannot recover to the normal state of health. To find causes for this, obstacles and preferences regarding physical activities of cancer patients and survivors were studied. The results showed that obstacles included poor physical strength, fatigue, fear of recurrence, stress, lack of motivation, economic burdens, family support, and knowledge and experience of exercise. The most preferred physical activity was low- to medium-intensity walking [5].

Regardless of the existence of studies and cancer mortality, educational and operational institutions and programs for professionals to guide proper exercise for cancer patients and survivors remain lacking. Many cancer survivors who lacked physical activity and experience with exercise reported that they could comprehend personal obstacles and preferences regarding exercise after regularly participating in exercise activities [6]. This is important because they could apply exercise programs and eventually gain motivation to exercise more regularly [7].
This suggests the importance of providing exercise opportunities for patients and survivors and emphasizes the role of professional kinesiologists. As cancer mortality increases and exercise’s benefits are emphasized, improving the professional competence of professional kinesiologists in this regard is highly recommended.

Reference


