

Assessment and Management of Lymphatic Pain in Breast Cancer Survivors

GA, UNITED STATES, October 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Lymphatic](#) pain refers to co-occurring pain, or sensations of aching, soreness, tenderness, and swelling due to fluid accumulation. Lymphatic pain impairs breast cancer survivors' physical function, emotional and overall health. Lymphatic pain usually occurs in the ipsilateral body or upper limb following breast cancer treatment. Precision assessment to distinguish lymphatic pain from other different types of pain is essential. Innovative behavioral interventions to promote lymph flow and reduce inflammation are effective to reduce lymphatic pain.

Among the 7.8 million women with breast cancer worldwide, at least 33% to 44% are affected by lymphatic pain. Breast cancer survivors usually suffer lymphatic pain in the ipsilateral body or upper limb, and pharmacological approaches are not effective for lymphatic pain.

In a recent publication (doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wcn.2024.04.001>) in *Women and Children Nursing*, a group of researchers from the United States and Spain further deepened our understanding of this particular type of pain through evidence-based knowledge and insights into precision assessment and therapeutic behavioral intervention.

"Historically, the concept of cancer-related pain has been used to study chronic pain associated with cancer or cancer treatment. Cancer-related pain refers to persistent pain that continues more than three months after active cancer treatment," says lead author, Jeanna Qiu, a MD-PhD student at Harvard Medical School. "Conventional research on chronic cancer pain focuses on occurrence and severity of general bodily pain in any body location. This approach has not been able to distinguish different types of pain after cancer treatment, such as lymphatic pain due to fluid accumulation and inflammation, general bodily pain, postmastectomy pain, chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy, or arthralgias related to hormonal treatments."

Hence, opportunities are missed when it comes to investigating the underlying physiological and psychosocial mechanisms of different types of pain and develop efficacious pain treatments.

To that end, the team provided evidence for the etiology of lymphatic pain, conducted objective and subjective assessment of lymphatic pain, and further offered evidence for the effective behavioral interventions to promote lymph flow and reduce inflammation for lymphatic pain.

According to co-first author Mei Fu, at Dorothy and Dale Thompson Missouri Endowed Professor

in Nursing and Associate Dean for Research at University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Nursing and Health Studies, the study provided much needed knowledge regarding precision assessment that enables clinicians to distinguish different types of pain.

“Detailed evidence also underscored the effectiveness of behavioral interventions to promote lymph flow, such as The-Optimal-Lymph-Flow program,” says Fu. “The comprehensive knowledge and evidence in this study can be directly applied to clinical practice to reduce lymphatic pain in women treated for breast cancer to reduce lymphatic pain.”

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