Functional Ability and Physical Activity in Children and Adolescents after Lower Extremity Bone Tumor surgery.

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Background: Survival rates of patients with malignant bone tumors improved over the last decades. Similarly, various extremity salvage procedures became available leading to a decline of amputation rates. Functional ability and the level of physical activity are important outcome measures in children and young adults after surgery for a malignant tumor of the lower extremity. However, extensive research report disappointing outcome scores in comparison with healthy peers and other pediatric cancer survivors and has not been able to determine consistent advantages for either limb-salvage or ablative procedures.

Methods: Functional ability and physical activity scores in comparison with healthy peers, other pediatric cancer patients and differences between different surgical options will be highlighted based on current literature.

Results: Patients after lower extremity bone tumor surgery report significantly lower functional ability and physical activity scores in comparison with healthy peers and most other pediatric cancer patients. Furthermore, patients after bone tumor surgery report no consistent differences at physical ability and functional activity levels between limb-salvage or ablative surgery. However, different sportive choices were made based on the fragility of the reconstructed extremity. Prospectively, no further improvements were achieved after two years since surgery.

Discussion: The implication of the data published so far for children and young adults is hampered by the selection of predominantly elderly patients and the lack of objective and child adequate measures. Furthermore, research is limited to daily functioning and activities with very few interest into sportive and intensive activities that characterize childhood and adolescence. Different initiatives to improve functional ability and physical activity levels like oncological training and sportive rehabilitation will be presented.

Abstract for oral presentation (25 min) at nurses program

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