

**Introduction**

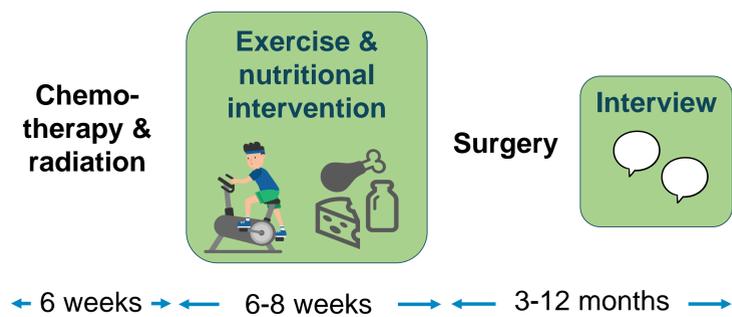
To optimize participation in prehabilitation programs, personalized interventions are recommended, requiring insight into what motivates patients to participate in such programs.

**Purpose**

To identify factors that contribute to the participation of patients with esophageal cancer in a prehabilitation program.

**Methods**

- Multicenter, qualitative study
- 12 patients with esophageal cancer (68.9 (7.0) years)



- Semi-structured interviews, an inductive thematic analysis.

**THREE THEMES**

1

**Internal motivation**

- Clear purpose: 'to get through surgery'
- Importance of own efforts
- A positive change of mind during prehabilitation

'A good physical condition was necessary to fight.' (pt 9)  
  
'At that moment, I felt sick, and I thought: leave me alone. But now, I can really say it was necessary to train.' (pt 6)

2

**External motivation**

- Support and supervision from different healthcare providers
- Different preferences for the level of dietary support and training supervision
- Support from family members

'Just going to the physiotherapist makes you more motivated.' (pt 7)  
  
'I don't like gyms. I prefer to do it myself. That's what I said, and that's what I did.' (pt 4)

3

**Program feasibility**

- Very limited barriers to participate in the program
- Feasibility contributes to a good participation
- Impact of the program: patients felt better prepared for surgery

'I was more relaxed before surgery. Because I was in good shape, and I got a bit of confidence out of that.' (pt 12)

**Conclusion**

This study shows that patients with esophageal cancer are motivated by internal and external factors to participate in a multimodal prehabilitation program.

**Clinical implications**

- ➔ Clear information about the purpose of prehabilitation is essential and should be emphasized by different healthcare disciplines.
- ➔ Family members must be actively involved in prehabilitation care.
- ➔ The intensity of dietary support and physiotherapeutic supervision needs to be individually tailored to provide feasible and personalized interventions.