

# Physiotherapy intervention for fatigue in palliative care: a systematic review

L. Pedro<sup>1</sup>; A. Oliveira<sup>2</sup>; C. Maia Moura<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Escola Superior de Tecnologia da Saúde de Lisboa – Politécnico de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal.

<sup>2</sup>ACES Loures-Odivelas – Lisboa, Portugal

<sup>3</sup>Escola Superior de Saúde Atlântida – Oiras - Portugal

**Background:** Fatigue is recognized as one of the most prevalent, distressing and debilitating symptoms experienced by people in palliative care. Appropriate interventions may bring considerable improvements in quality of life to palliative care patients and their families, reducing physical, psychological and spiritual distress.

**Aims:** To evaluate the effect of physiotherapy intervention on fatigue in palliative care patients.

**Methods:** The research was performed in MEDLINE and PeDRO, and Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL) databases on September 2016. Articles in English published from 2006 to 2016 were selected. We used the following keywords: "fatigue" and "palliative Care" and "physiotherapy" and "physical therapy" having as result **117 articles in MEDLINE, 7 in Cochrane and 2 in PeDRO.**

All studies that included physiotherapy intervention, exercise programs and other nonpharmacological interventions that can be included on a physiotherapy plan for palliative care patients or with advanced disease, were included.

**At the end 25 articles were selected.**

**Results:** We found studies to control fatigue in palliative care patients with advanced stage in various types of oncology populations, fibrosis cystic, COPD, HIV and neurodegenerative diseases. Education programs (included teaching energy-conservation techniques), counseling, multimodal mind-body, walking, resistance training and aerobic exercise, massage and relaxation seems to reduce fatigue in palliative care patients or with advanced disease.

**Conclusion/ Discussion:** In summary, there is some evidence to indicate that strategies, that can be used in physiotherapy, to increase physical activity and functioning, like exercise programs, massage, relaxation techniques, counseling and education are associated with a reduction in fatigue in palliative care patients or with advanced disease.

[luisa.pedro@estesl.ipl.pt](mailto:luisa.pedro@estesl.ipl.pt)  
[aimoliveira184@gmail.com](mailto:aimoliveira184@gmail.com)  
[claudiamaiamoura@gmail.com](mailto:claudiamaiamoura@gmail.com)