

## LITERATURE REVIEW: PHYSIOTHERAPY IN PALLIATIVE CARE IN BREAST CANCER

---

*Bárbara Furbino Gonzaga*

Centro Universitário Una Betim

Betim – MG

<https://lattes.cnpq.br/5121868572629244>

*Marília da Silva Almeida*

Centro Universitário Una Betim

Betim – MG

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/9309829953959798>

*Vitória Moraes de Gouvea*

Centro Universitário Una Betim

Betim – MG

*Aline Reis Targa*

Centro Universitário Una Betim

Betim – MG

*Marcia Rodrigues Franco Zambelli*

Centro Universitário Una Betim

Betim – MG

All content in this magazine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License. Attribution-Non-Commercial-Non-Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).



**Abstract: Introduction:** Palliative Care has become essential after the increasing incidence of loss of functionality in individuals with non-communicable diseases, including breast cancer. Given this panorama, we see the important role of the physiotherapist in minimizing the adverse effects of treatment. **Goal:** The study aims to present scientific evidence about the importance of physiotherapy in palliative care. **Method:** This is a narrative literature review study, where the following databases were used: Medline, PEDro, SciELO and Lilacs between the years 2004 and 2021. In total, 18 articles were found, obtaining 5 articles as a final selection. **Results:** After careful analysis of the articles, it is clear that physiotherapy works at all levels of treatment as well as improving quality of life, pain relief, functionality and reduction of symptoms related to the disease. The most used techniques in palliative care are manual therapy, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), kinesiotherapy, lymphatic drainage, muscle strengthening, cryotherapy and respiratory maneuvers. **Conclusion:** Physiotherapy has diversified over the years with its techniques and has proven to be fundamental in monitoring cancer patients. However, further studies are still needed to prove its importance to enhance the performance of this professional. **Keywords:** palliative care, oncological physiotherapy and breast cancer.

## INTRODUCTION

According to the National Cancer Institute (INCA), cancer is a malignant disease where there is disordered growth of aggressive and uncontrollable cells, determining the formation of tumors.<sup>10</sup> Breast cancer is one of the most common in Brazil and the world, affecting mostly women. It normally develops in older women, especially after 50 years of age, compromising the patient's quality of life,

mental health and self-esteem<sup>10</sup>.

Palliative care is offered by a multidisciplinary team when there is no cure, involving assessment, pain treatment and support for family members. Humanized physiotherapy treatment seeks pain relief, improved functionality and quality of life in the final stages of life. This approach is not only based on protocols, but on principles, involving ethics and the provision of effective and quality treatment. It is important to emphasize that palliative care does not mean abandoning active treatment, being implemented in a complementary way to other therapies.

## GOAL

The aim of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of physiotherapy in palliative care with a focus on improving quality of life, pain relief, functionality and reduction of symptoms related to breast cancer treatment.

## METHODOLOGY

This is a narrative review of the literature. Articles published between 2004 and 2021 in the following databases were included for research: Medline, PEDro, SciELO and Lilacs, with the keywords: palliative care, oncological physiotherapy and breast cancer. The selection of articles was based on studies that investigated the role of the physiotherapist in the care of cancer patients with breast cancer (CA) in palliative care. In total, a total of 18 articles were found. Of these, 6 did not address the role of the physiotherapist, 3 did not talk about breast cancer, and 4 did not include palliative care. At the end of the selection process, 13 articles were excluded and 5 articles were considered eligible and included in this review.<sup>3,6,10,14,16</sup> Figure 1 below illustrates the article selection process.

Title	Authors	Methodology	Description of the intervention	Conclusions
The role of physiotherapy in palliative care for cancer patients <sup>10</sup>	Fernando Cesar Iwamoto Marcucci, 2004.	Literature review. The texts were analyzed and synthesized reflexively in order to obtain consistent information.	The main physiotherapeutic interventions were analgesic methods, interventions in psychophysical symptoms such as depression and stress, action on musculoskeletal complications, resources for improving fatigue, techniques for improving lung function.	Palliative physiotherapy must be used to improve the quality of life, reducing symptoms and promoting functionality in patients without healing possibilities. For this to be achieved, it is necessary to maintain an open communication channel with the patient, family members and a multidisciplinary team.
The role of the physiotherapist in palliative care and the resources used to improve the quality of life of terminally ill cancer patients <sup>16</sup>	Lais Evelina Santos Silva, Mateus da Silva Cruz, Júlia de Oliveira, Giovanna Duarte Sampaio Ribeiro, Poliani de Oliveira Lima, Abrahão Augusto Joviniano Quadros, Cláudia Kumpel, 2021.	Literature review consists of an integrative analysis.	The study does not present interventions used, but rather a review of studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of physiotherapeutic work with the multi-team on patients undergoing palliative care.	The final conclusion of the study emphasized the importance of the multidisciplinary team with the patient in palliative care. In addition to observing the crucial role of the physiotherapist in relieving pain and respiratory and osteomyoarticular complications.
The Importance of Physiotherapy in Palliative Care: A Literature Review <sup>14</sup>	Ana Paula Parucker, Thais Karoline Iocca Assunção, Eduardo Lafaiette de Oliveira, 2022.	Review of literature	The bibliographical survey portrays rehabilitation techniques used by physiotherapists within a multidisciplinary team, such as manual therapies, kinesiotherapy, transcutaneous electrical stimulation for pain relief, physical training programs, respiratory muscle training and low-intensity aerobics to reduce energy expenditure, daily exercises to reduce fatigue and dyspnea, mask with positive respiratory pressure to reduce mucus, complex decongestive therapy to improve edema and proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation to improve muscle fatigue.	There is a lack of studies that address the role of physiotherapy in palliative care, both from the professional's point of view, highlighting that physiotherapy has a range of treatments to be explored, and from the patient's point of view regarding the care offered to them during treatment in Palliative Care.

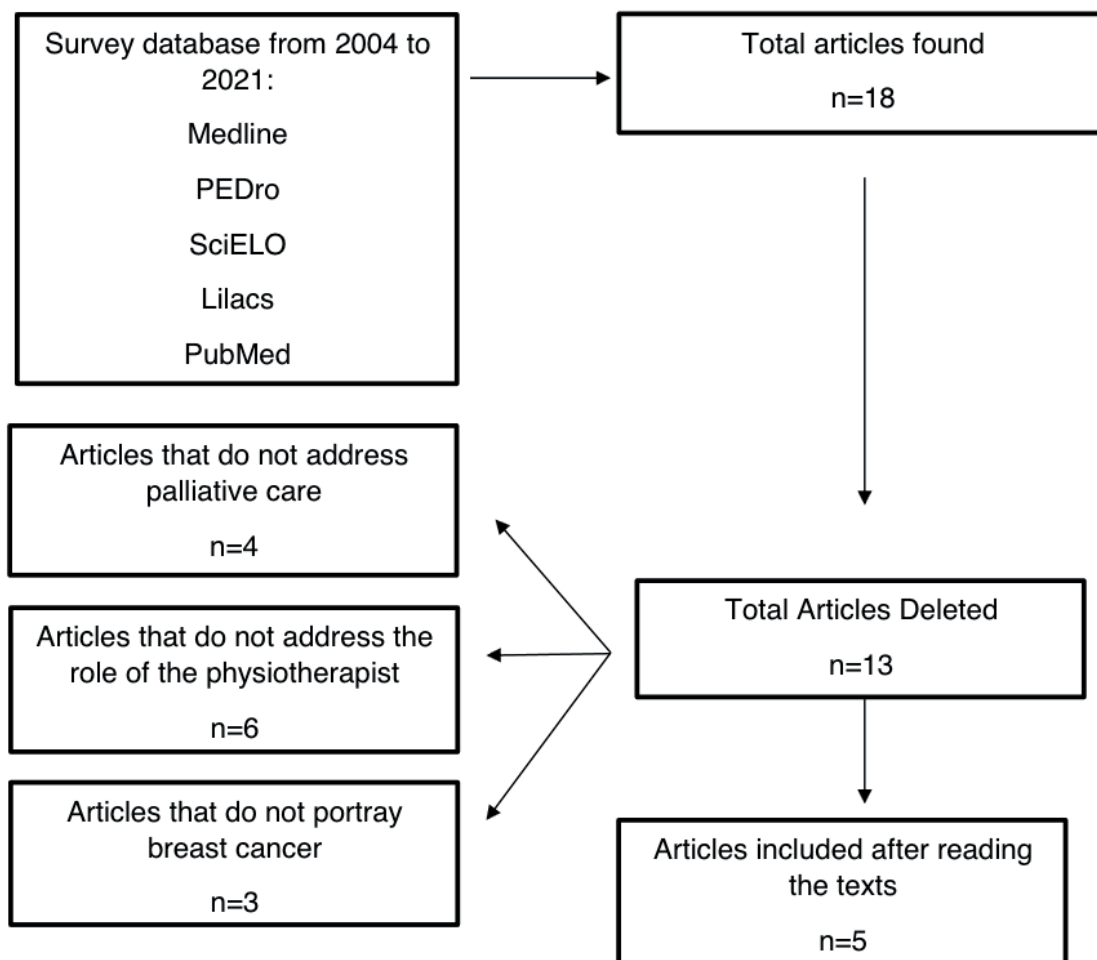
<p>Care practices in oncology: the experience of physiotherapy in patients with breast cancer<sup>3</sup></p>	<p>Lina Faria, 2010.</p>	<p>Monograph focusing on the role of the physiotherapist in oncology and the treatment of breast cancer, from the point of view of treatment and prevention.</p>	<p>The main objective was to show how early oncological physiotherapy is of great importance to minimize the adverse effects of breast cancer treatment.</p>	<p>Training and competence in physiotherapy are fundamental to achieving the expected results. It is necessary to consider the preventive nature and anticipate possible complications to avoid unnecessary suffering. A well-trained professional will be able to predict complications.</p>
<p>PALLIATIVE CARE: The importance of physiotherapy in cancer patients 6</p>	<p>Luanne Santos de Jesus, 2021.</p>	<p>Monography.</p>	<p>Therapeutic resources in palliative care improve symptoms and quality of life. Through pain relief methods electrotherapy, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), kinesiotherapy, cryotherapy (acute processes), thermotherapy, manual therapy, stretching, changes in position, appropriate positioning, active exercises with light weight. In pulmonary dysfunctions, it uses position changes, lung re-expansion maneuvers, flow encouragers, bronchial hygiene maneuvers, breathing exercises, O2 support, aspiration, cough stimulation and relaxation. In neurological disorders, active and functional exercises, sensory training and strengthening are used. In pulmonary dysfunctions, it uses position changes, lung re-expansion maneuvers, flow encouragers, bronchial hygiene maneuvers, breathing exercises, O2 support, aspiration, cough stimulation and relaxation. In neurological disorders, active and functional exercises, sensory training and strengthening are used.</p>	<p>Physiotherapy can reduce hospitalization time, improve quality of life and control symptoms in these individuals.</p>

Figure 1.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After a careful analysis of the bibliographic references, we observed that the topic has

been addressed over the years. Table 1 below summarizes the main characteristics of the included studies.



### THE ROLE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY IN PALLIATIVE CARE

Patients in terminal stages are generally unnecessarily prevented from performing some functions. Physiotherapy aims to preserve life, alleviate symptoms, and mainly restore the patient's functionality and resume activities of daily living. Communication between the patient and the physiotherapist is essential, as it helps to alleviate anxiety symptoms and brings hope of better treatment conditions. It is always necessary for the

patient to be aware of their conditions and trust the professional so that together they can achieve better results with the treatment. The physiotherapist must be attentive to all signs and symptoms demonstrated by the patient and use their techniques within palliative care.<sup>10,14</sup>

Pain relief treatment is one of the pillars of treatment, aiming to provide maximum comfort to the patient. Pain in this context can be treated as physical or mental, in which we need a multidisciplinary team to differentiate

between them in treatment. (TENS) can be used to relieve the patient's pain immediately, avoiding the use of analgesics, but it does not bring beneficial results in the long term.<sup>10</sup> A Manual therapy can complement pain relief, reducing muscle tension and improving tissue circulation<sup>10</sup>. Cryotherapy can be used to relieve musculoskeletal pain, unlike the use of heat, which is not recommended for these patients, as it produces an increase in blood flow. It is also very common for cancer patients to have changes in fatigue and accumulation of pulmonary secretion, and in addition to respiratory control exercises, these patients are subjected to bronchial hygiene breathing maneuvers and assisted coughing to maintain pulmonary oxygenation. In some cases, it will

be necessary to perform aspiration through a probe, based on the needs of each individual.<sup>6,10,14</sup>

## CONCLUSION

It is therefore concluded that physiotherapy plays a very important role in the palliative care of patients with breast cancer, and its presence is essential throughout the rehabilitation process, as it does not act directly with the cure, but rather improves functionality and reduces pain. The multidisciplinary team must seek to promote health in an equitable and quality manner, regardless of the patient's socioeconomic status.

## REFERENCES

1. BITENCOURT, Paula Lopes Santos et al. Atuação da Fisioterapia no Linfedema Neoplásico em Paciente com Câncer de Mama Metastático: Relato de Caso. *Revista Brasileira de Cancerologia*, v. 67, n. 4, 2021. <https://rbc.inca.gov.br/index.php/revista/article/view/1293>
2. DOS SANTOS SILVA, Leonel et al. Qualidade de vida de pacientes com câncer avançado na terapêutica paliativa e no cuidado paliativo. *Aquichan*, v. 19, n. 3, p. 7, 2019. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7071185>
3. FARIA, Lina. As práticas do cuidar na oncologia: a experiência da fisioterapia em pacientes com câncer de mama. *História, ciências, saúde-manguinhos*, v. 17, p. 69-87, 2010. <https://www.scielo.br/j/hcsm/a/45chVmvcvLWKyQH5kHymDHn/>
4. FERRAI, Carla Maria Maluf et al. Uma leitura bioética sobre cuidados paliativos: caracterização da produção científica sobre o tema. *Bioethikos*, v. 2, n. 1, p. 99-104, 2008. <https://repositorio.usp.br/item/001713301>
5. GINSBURG, Ophira et al. The global burden of women's cancers: a grand challenge in global health. *The Lancet*, v. 389, n. 10071, p. 847-860, 2017. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)31392-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(16)31392-7/fulltext)
6. JESUS, Luanne Santos de. Cuidados paliativos: a importância da fisioterapia no paciente oncológico. 2021. <https://repositorio.animaeducacao.com.br/handle/ANIMA/17867>
7. KHAN, Fary et al. Multidisciplinary rehabilitation for follow up of women treated for breast cancer. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, n. 12, 2012. <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD009553.pub2/abstract>
8. LIMA, Eunice de Oliveira Lacerda; SILVA, Marcelle Miranda da. Qualidade de vida de mulheres acometidas por câncer de mama localmente avançado ou metastático. *Revista Gaúcha de Enfermagem*, v. 41, 2020. <https://www.scielo.br/j/rgenf/a/Ydv99nsvxypcYBspdvzHx/?lang=pt>
9. MACHADO, Vivian Maria Siqueira et al. Atuação do fisioterapeuta nos cuidados paliativos em pacientes adultos: revisão integrativa. *Revista Eletrônica Acervo Saúde*, v. 13, n. 3, p. e6493-e6493, 2021. <https://acervomais.com.br/index.php/saude/article/view/6493>

10. MARCUCCI, Fernando Cesar Iwamoto. O papel da fisioterapia nos cuidados paliativos a pacientes com câncer. **Revista brasileira de cancerologia**, v. 51, n. 1, p. 67-77, 2005. <https://rbc.inca.gov.br/index.php/revista/article/view/1999>
11. MURRAY, James et al. The role of exercise in the prevention of cancer therapy-related cardiac dysfunction in breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy: systematic review. **European journal of preventive cardiology**, v. 29, n. 3, p. 463-472, 2022. <https://academic.oup.com/eurjpc/article-abstract/29/3/463/6163156>
12. MATSUMOTO, Dalva Yukie. Cuidados paliativos: conceitos, fundamentos e princípios. **Manual de cuidados paliativos ANCP**, v. 2, n. 2, p. 23-24, 2012. [https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/5906161/mod\\_folder/content/0/Manual-de-cuidados-paliativos-ANCP.pdf#page=23](https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/5906161/mod_folder/content/0/Manual-de-cuidados-paliativos-ANCP.pdf#page=23)
13. OLIVEIRA, Paloma Elisama; ISIDORO, Geovanna Maria; SILVA, Simone Albino. Cuidados à pessoa com câncer de mama metastático na atenção básica: relato de caso/Care for the person with metastatic breast cancer in primary care: case report. **Journal of Nursing and Health**, v. 11, n. 3, 2021. <https://periodicos.ufpel.edu.br/index.php/enfermagem/article/view/19232>
14. PARUCKER, Ana Paula; ASSUNÇÃO, Thais Karoline Iocca; DE OLIVEIRA, Eduardo Lafaiette. A Importância da Fisioterapia nos Cuidados Paliativos. **Monumenta-Revista de Estudos Interdisciplinares**, v. 2, n. 4, p. 48-67, 2021. <https://monumenta.emnuvens.com.br/monumenta/article/view/100>
15. PAULO, Thais RS et al. The impact of an exercise program on quality of life in older breast cancer survivors undergoing aromatase inhibitor therapy: a randomized controlled trial. **Health and Quality of Life Outcomes**, v. 17, p. 1-12, 2019. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12955-019-1090-4>
16. SILVA, Laís Evelin Santos et al. A função do fisioterapeuta nos cuidados paliativos e os recursos utilizados para melhoria de qualidade de vida do paciente oncológico em estado terminal. **Research, Society and Development**, v. 10, n. 16, p. e190101623148-e190101623148, 2021. <https://rsdjournal.org/index.php/rsd/article/view/23148>
17. SILVA, Ronaldo Corrêa Ferreira da; HORTALE, Virginia Alonso. Cuidados paliativos oncológicos: elementos para o debate de diretrizes nesta área. **Cadernos de saúde pública**, v. 22, p. 2055-2066, 2006. [https://www.scielo.org/article/ssm/content/raw/?resource\\_ssm\\_path=/media/assets/csp/v22n10/04.pdf](https://www.scielo.org/article/ssm/content/raw/?resource_ssm_path=/media/assets/csp/v22n10/04.pdf)
18. TELLES, Audrei Castro et al. Transição para o cuidado paliativo exclusivo de mulheres com câncer de mama. **Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem**, v. 74, 2021. <https://www.scielo.br/j/reben/a/XmkT3CRxtbHsnhT57TkCgxp/?lang=pt>