

Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation

Abstract Form

In 250-350 words, define the research problem, state the significance of the research, and present the research methodology and plan for analysis. **DO NOT USE A SEPARATE SHEET.**

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the feasibility of non-hormonal interventions to improve and rehabilitate symptoms related to urogenital atrophy.

Specific Aims:

Primary Aim #1: Assess the subjective and objective rehabilitative outcomes of treatment for urogenital symptoms, specifically vaginal dryness/pain as related to effect on sexual function in menopausal breast cancer survivors taking omega 3 fatty acids (Lovaza®).

Secondary Aim #1: Evaluate possible correlates that modulate symptoms related to urogenital atrophy, including physical factors related to body mass/fat and dietary factors; objective biomarkers and measurements, and subjective questionnaires are surrogate endpoints.

Rationale / Significance of Study: Few evidence-based studies exist about management of symptoms related to urogenital atrophy in breast cancer survivors. Practitioners have a responsibility to appropriately assess urogenital atrophy and guide women to safe, alternative options for relief of these unpleasant symptoms. Rehabilitation of vaginal tissues after cancer treatment is necessary to improve quality of life, decrease painful response, and increase sexual satisfaction.

Main Research Design: An exploratory pilot study is proposed to determine the feasibility of omega 3 fatty acids as a non-hormonal intervention to reduce inflammation and symptoms related to urogenital atrophy. **Setting:** A Midwestern, NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Comprehensive Breast Health Center, OB/GYN Services.

Sample: Menopausal breast cancer survivors.

Methods: A short-term course (6 months) of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) in the form of an oral capsule will be utilized in the study; local response to treatment is anticipated during this period. Genital atrophy will be assessed by vaginal pH, urogenital exam, and self-report questionnaires. Evidence of adherence will be measured by systemic effects on lipid/cholesterol panels. Possible correlates between diet/fat intake and body fat measurements will be evaluated with dietary records and anthropometric measurements.

Implications for Practice: To expand and improve our current knowledge about symptoms related to urogenital atrophy in breast cancer survivors.