Patient Empowerment by Increased Knowledge and Practice

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Background
In order to practice self-management patients with lymphoedema/lipoedema need to acquire knowledge about their condition and methods for self-care.

Aim
Patient empowerment by increased knowledge and practice of self-management of chronic oedema.

Method
- A two-day workshop and a series of lectures to increase the knowledge of what the patients can do themselves to gain improved control of their chronic oedemas.
- Engagement from several different stakeholders: a lymphoedema clinic, industry representatives, lymph therapists physical activities instructors.
- Follow up with evaluation questionnaires.

The workshop covers:
- Basic knowledge about the lymphatic system, instructions and practice of deep-breathing, effective self-MLD, skincare and diet.
- Compression alternatives and how to assess if the compression fits properly.
- Physical exercise improving the lymph flow.
- A “try-for-yourself” introduction to additional methods supporting the lymph flow such as pneumatic compression (IPC), low level laser therapy (LLLT), lymph taping, Deep oscillation and Qigong.
- An introduction to research about chronic oedema and treatment methods used in the workshop.
- Informal meetings with fellow patients, lymph therapists, industry representatives and caregivers.

Outcome:
Evaluation of impact. 86 participants at 4 workshops.
Evaluation showed 73% marked excellent, 18 % very satisfied (no one marked the columns not satisfied and dissatisfied), 9% did not participate/fill in the evaluation form as they were accompanying industry representatives, caregivers.
SÖF has noticed an increased demand for workshops on self-management to be held more frequently.


Conclusion
According to Kaiser Permanentes triangle 70-80% suffering from chronic conditions such as lymphoedema can control their disease with supported self-management.

With the goal that 70-80% of the patients with lymphoedema/lipoedema shall gain best possible control of their swelling, the patients need knowledge about the lymphatic system and methods to improve the lymph flow. Patients also need to learn risk assessment and get knowledge of how to handle an increased swelling and what works for the individual.

All treatment/management methods are not suitable for every individual oedema situation. A two day workshop provides an opportunity to try out some of the management methods available. The workshop raised the lymphological awareness needed in order to empower the patients to gain control of their chronic oedemas.