GROUP 3: Prehabilitation in Breast Cancer

Time: 20 minutes

YOUR CANCER: CONTEXT

Breast cancer treatment may involve surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, or a combination. Unlike lung and colorectal cancer, the primary surgery is not usually as physiologically demanding. However, treatment-related side effects, including fatigue, reduced shoulder mobility after surgery, and the effects of chemotherapy, make prehabilitation relevant. The evidence base is growing but less established than for colorectal cancer.

YOUR TASK

Prehabilitation means preparing a patient physically, nutritionally, and psychologically BEFORE their treatment begins, so they go into it in the best possible condition.

Your group has been assigned one cancer. Use your phones, laptops, or any available resource to find answers to the questions below.

Record every source you use in the source table at the end. You will be asked to share and evaluate your sources in the debrief.

OUTCOME MEASURES TO LOOK FOR

When you find evidence of prehabilitation benefits, look for these specific measures:

Length of hospital stay: did prehab reduce how long patients spent in hospital after surgery?

Complication rates: did prehab reduce infection, wound healing problems, or other post-operative complications?

Functional capacity: look for the six-minute walk test (6MWT) or cardiopulmonary exercise testing (CPET) as measures of fitness before and after prehab.

Nutritional status: handgrip strength and blood protein levels (albumin) are common markers.

Fatigue and psychological wellbeing: patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) are increasingly used.

If you find a study, note the outcome measure used. Not all studies measure the same things.

Questions

Q1	Is there evidence that exercise before breast cancer surgery or chemotherapy improves outcomes? What types of exercise have been studied and what outcomes were measured?

Q2	Chemotherapy-induced fatigue is one of the most common and debilitating side effects of breast cancer treatment. Is there evidence that prehabilitation reduces fatigue or improves tolerance of chemotherapy?

Q3	What nutritional interventions have been studied in breast cancer prehabilitation? Are there specific nutritional targets or approaches that have shown benefit?

Q4	Breast cancer treatment can significantly affect body image, psychological wellbeing, and quality of life. Is psychological support included in prehabilitation programmes for breast cancer, and is there evidence it makes a difference to outcomes?

Source Record

Record every source you used below. You will discuss these in the debrief.

Source (name or URL)	Type (e.g. NHS, journal, charity)	How reliable do you think it is?