

Cancer Rehabilitation: Improving Quality of Life After a Diagnosis of Cancer

S. Kamal Fetouh, MD

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) defines a cancer survivor as anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer from the time of diagnosis and for the balance of his or her life. In 2008 they estimated 11 million persons in the United States who were living with a previously diagnosed cancer. They estimate that the number of cancer survivors in the U.S. to reach 18 million by 2020.

About 1 in 4 cancer survivors experience pain related to their cancer treatment including chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgery. Cancer and cancer treatments can have a long standing impact on the body including the following common complaints:

- ▶ Acute and chronic pain including back pain
- ▶ Muscle and Nerve problems
- ▶ Joint problems including flexibility and range of motion problems including frozen shoulder
- ▶ Post-Mastectomy pain syndrome
- ▶ Coordination, balance and other walking problems
- ▶ Jaw problems (Trismus)
- ▶ Radiation-induced fibrosis, spasticity, and dystonia of the neck
- ▶ Amputation issues

There is now new hope for cancer survivors and their families in dealing with aftermath of their cancer treatments.

Cancer Rehabilitation specialists are leading the way in finding treatments to get all cancer patients to their optimal quality of life. No one should have to accept their disabilities from their cancer treatments as their new normal without first trying to improve them through rehabilitation.

And now in Brevard County we have such a specialist, Dr. Sherin Kamal Fetouh, MD, FAAPMR. He is double board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Pain Medicine with completion of residency training at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia and fellowship training at the world-renowned Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

As a Cancer Rehabilitation Specialist he takes an active role in supporting oncologists, radiation oncologists, and surgeons in helping treat ailments related to cancer and its treatments. He may see patients who have any type of cancer at any stage of their disease.



Dr. Fetouh has expertise in specifically treating cancer patients for their pain with highly specific interventional techniques. As indicated, he may perform joint and soft tissue injections, nerve blocks, spinal injections, botulinum toxin injections as well as other agents to optimize the patient's functions and improve their overall quality of life. He can also perform more complex procedures such as vertebroplasty/kyphoplasty, spinal cord stimulator placements, radiofrequency nerve ablation procedures and new radiofrequency ablation treatments for metastatic bone tumors which can help eliminate spinal pain from metastasis. Treatment of cancer related pain can be challenging and it may be necessary to involve multiple specialists with different sets of expertise in order to achieve adequate pain control and improved quality of life.

Pain is highly prevalent in cancer survivors and active cancer patients. It is important for patients to follow up regularly with their oncologist. For these patients, there are a variety of safe, interventional techniques that are associated with a high degree of success in achieving excellent pain control. Ask your oncologist or pain specialist about your options.



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Dr. S. Kamal Fetouh is Double Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Pain Medicine. His treatment strategy is often multimodal. He will often collaborate with a team of specialists to provide comprehensive treatments for his patients. Treatments for pain management, cancer-related impairments, and disability can include a combination of physical, occupational, and/or lymphedema therapy. Also assistive devices, orthotics, prosthetics, medications, patient education as well as other agents to optimize patients' function and improve their overall quality of life.