

Feasibility and Preliminary Effects of the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Train Protocol© During Chemotherapy for Non-Metastatic Breast Cancer: A Randomized Pilot Study

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Objectives: Cancer-related psychological distress and traumatic symptoms are common among women receiving chemotherapy for breast cancer [1-4]. The Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Train Protocol© [5] was developed to target treatment-related traumatic experiences throughout the chemotherapy pathway. This pilot randomized study evaluated the feasibility of the protocol and explored its effects on trauma, emotional regulation and quality of life [6-8].

Sample and Setting: Fifty women receiving chemotherapy for non-metastatic breast cancer were recruited from two European oncology centers and randomized to either the EMDR Train Protocol© (n = 25) or usual care (n = 25).

Procedures: Participants were assessed before chemotherapy (T1), at completion of chemotherapy (T2) and at three and six months after the end of chemotherapy (T3 and T4). Outcomes included trauma-related symptoms, emotional regulation (HADS and Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale), post-traumatic growth (PTGI), and quality of life (EORTC QLQ-C30). Group-by-time effects were analysed using mixed linear models.

Results: At this point, preliminary results suggest no significant difference between control and EMDR groups on time comparison (T1 vs T2). Full results are needed in order to draw conclusions about the impact of the Train Protocol©. Moreover, the analysis will continue with full T3 (3 months after T2) and T4 (6 months after T2) assessments.

Conclusion and Clinical Implications: Although this pilot study was not powered to detect moderate between-group effects, the EMDR Train Protocol© proved feasible in women undergoing chemotherapy.

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Biosketch

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CURRENT AND PAST POSITIONS

Since 2005: Psychologist in palliative team, breast cancer clinic, intensive care, COVID, Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg, Luxembourg.

Since 2009: Head of the Psychological Department, Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg, Luxembourg.

Since 2009: Trainer in Health Psychology, including: 2025 Trainer IFEMDR (Paris), "La place de l'oncologie en EMDR" (2 days); 2023/2025 Trainer for general practitioners in palliative care and in the oncology curriculum at Uni.lu; 2024 "Oncology and care for families through EMDR," Speaker in Madrid, Asociación EMDR España; 2023/2024/2025 Trainer for general practitioners (OMEGA 90, Uni.lu); 2022 EMDR Speaker at EMDR Conference Valencia "Resilience and Family"; since 2020 Trainer "EMDR in Oncology"; 2019–2020 Speaker in European Parliament, Brussels and Luxembourg, "Comment accompagner un proche?"; 2019 Speaker "EMDR et CANCER: psychopathologie et interventions," MAM, Universités de Metz.

Since 2025: Principal Investigator (Psychologist, CHL), research project "Feasibility and preliminary effects of the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Train Protocol© during chemotherapy for non-metastatic breast cancer: a randomized pilot study."

EDUCATION

2021–2023: Inter-university Certificate in Psycho-Oncology, Belgium.

Since 2018: Practitioner, EMDR Europe.

Since 2009: Hypnosis Therapist, Erickson approach.

2003–2004: Health Psychology, University of Louvain, Belgium.

1998–2003: Studies in Clinical Psychology, University of Louvain, Belgium.

OTHER RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Archuletta, C., Grandjean, V. (in press, 2023). Health-Medical Challenges and Grief: Group EMDR Therapy for Patients and Caregivers. In R. Morrow Robinson, S. Kemal Kaptan (Eds), EMDR Group Therapy: Emerging Principles and Protocols to Treat Trauma and Beyond. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

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