Optimizing of the Rehabilitation Treatment for German Heartpatients by a Special Heart-Lifestyle-Training (HLT)

Cardiac Rehabilitation in Germany

In Germany, the possibility exists for patients who have undergone a myocardial infarction (MI) or coronary artery bypass operation (CAB) to take part in a 3-week rehabilitation programme that includes physical training, information about nutrition, making changes in one’s lifestyle and information about cardiovascular risk factors. But the long-term results regarding the following up of MI or CAB patients are not satisfying, probably due to the lack of an integrated longterm concept. Thus the Euroaspirin-Study reveals that 1 year after the treatment 60% of patients blood pressure is insufficiently controlled, they are physically inactive and more than 30% suffer from obesity.

Heart Lifestyle Training in motivating surroundings on Crete

Taking into account the results of the Lyon-Heart-Study, the Leipzig PET-Study and the Interheart Study a 2-week HeartLifestyleTraining (HLT) programme was developed to improve the long-term effects after rehabilitation. The goal of the HLT is to pass on the recommendations for prevention of the German and European society of Cardiology as practically as possible. The Crete Heart Weeks are carried out twice a year during the spring and autumn in an optimally equipped seaside hotel with groups of 50 – 80 participants, accompanied by a team of 12 – 15 doctors, psychologists, cooks, sport instructors, and various therapists. The project is supported through the good cooperation with the Cardiological Department of the University hospital of Heraklion.

The patients should be enabled to optimize their cholesterol, blood pressure and glucose levels with more self-responsibility through 2 lectures daily and individual consultations.

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Mediterranean diet

L - Less meat, more fish
O - Omega 3 fatty acids (primary in cold-saltwater fish, also in walnuts, rapeseed oil, green leafy vegetables…)
O - (Obst), lots of fruits
G - (Gemüse), lots of vegetables, mith more legumes
O - Fats with many oleic acids (Mufa: mono unsaturated fatty acids; primary in oliveoil, rapeseed oil and nuts)

Instruction and motivation toward 30-60 minutes daily physical activity, with gymnastics, beach walking, and several mountain hikes.

Group sessions and seminars toward a autonomy and a good worklife balance:

- profession/occupation
- sense of meaning/culture
- family/social contacts
- health

Involvement of the life-companion as the most important health promoter

Results:

More than 350 heart patients, their life partners, and motivated for prevention people have thus for taken part in the heart training program on Crete with very positive resonance. In a rating from 1 to 5 (1=excellent, 5=bad) the last seminar was rated by the participants at 1,5 (medical lectures 1,1, cooking class 1,5, gymnastics 1,2, Nordic Walking 1,5, Yoga 2,1). In Januar 2006, individual participants confirmed in an interview by one of the major German television broadcasters that participation had led to a noticeable chan-

Conclusions:

This project may serve as an example that rehabilitation and prevention can be improved by attractive offers, even if this calls for more self-financing and self-responsibility without raising the costs for the public health-care-system.

Literature:

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