



*Letter to the Editor*

## Assessing Healthy Community Members' Understanding of Prehabilitation

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### Dear the Editor,

A prehabilitation program contributes to a lower incidence of postoperative complications and shorter length of hospital stay (Abola et al. 2018; McIsaac et al. 2022); however, its implementation in clinical settings can be challenging owing to anxiety and troublesome (Carli et al. 2020). Therefore, family involvement play an important role in completing a prehabilitation program. Herein, we report a questionnaire survey among healthy community people regarding their understanding of prehabilitation.

An anonymous, self-reporting questionnaire was administered to 103 members of a healthy community visiting the prehabilitation stand at a health fair held by Nara Medical University September 18, 2023. To ensure participant anonymity, no personally identifiable information was sought. Approval by the Medical Ethics Review Committee of Nara Medical University was not deemed necessary. Because of the anonymous nature of the data, the requirement for ethical approval was waived. Participants were informed in writing and verbally regarding the purpose of the questionnaire, its voluntary nature, compliance with data protection, and how the results would be used; their consent implied by the return of the questionnaires.

Questions were asked regarding age, sex, and the first check of prehabilitation awareness. Prehabilitation was then described verbally. Next, respondents were asked to indicate their interest in prehabilitation, the feasibility of implementing the program, the content of the program that could be implemented, and the harms associated with its implementation. The content of the program that could be

implemented were selected from a list of options with multiple answers permitted and the harms associated with its implementation were open-ended.

With a 100% valid response rate (N = 103), participants' median age was 48 years [interquartile range 36.7, 63] and 66% were female. We found that 77.8% of respondents were not aware of prehabilitation and the percentage of people interested in prehabilitation increased from 70% before the briefing to 98% after.

For undergoing surgery, 98% of the respondents opined that prehabilitation should be conducted, 81.5% considered that prehabilitation was easy to implement, and 96.1% said that they would recommend it to family and friends. The most common activities for prehabilitation could be walking (86.4%), protein intake (79.6%), stretching (77.7%), and cognitive training (70.9%), in that order. The most common concern was whether they would be able to continue a prehabilitation program (45.6%), followed by costs (25.2%) and increased frequency of visits (25.2%) (Table 1).

This study has limitation. Healthy community visiting the prehabilitation stand is a group of members of the healthy community who are attending the health fair, that means they are a group interested in health-related information. It is possible that this may have influenced the ratio of responses. Therefore, we would need to inform as many community members as possible about prehabilitation, regardless of their interest in health-related information.

Post the explanation of a prehabilitation program, more than 90% of the respondents expressed an interest and

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Table 1. Results of the questionnaire on prehabilitation (N = 103).

Questions and response	n/total N (%)
<b>Q1. Do you know about prehabilitation?</b>	
Yes	6/103 (5.8%)
I know a little	17/103 (16.5%)
No	80/103 (77.8%)
<b>Q2. Would you be interested in prehabilitation?</b>	
Yes	43/103 (41.8%)
Maybe	29/103 (28.2%)
Do not know	14/103 (13.6%)
Not really	14/103 (13.6%)
No	3/103 (2.9%)
<b>Q3. Did you find the explanation of prehabilitation interesting?</b>	
Yes	68/103 (66%)
Somewhat interesting	33/103 (32%)
Do not know	2/103 (1.9%)
Not really interesting	0/103 (0%)
No	0/103 (0%)
<b>Q4. Once you have decided to go for surgery, do you think you will enroll in prehabilitation?</b>	
Yes	88/103 (85.4%)
Maybe	13/103 (12.6%)
Do not know	2/103 (1.9%)
Not really	0/103 (0%)
No	0/103 (0%)
<b>Q5. Once the decision to undergo surgery has been made, would you recommend prehabilitation to the family?</b>	
Yes	85/103 (82.5%)
Maybe	14/103 (13.6%)
Do not know	2/103 (1.9%)
Not really	0/103 (0%)
No	2/103 (1.9%)
<b>Q6. Do you think prehabilitation is easy?</b>	
Yes	51/103 (49.5%)
Maybe	33/103 (32%)
Do not know	12/103 (11.7%)
Not really	6/103 (5.8%)
No	1/103 (1%)

Data are presented as cases (%).

The responses to Questions 1 and 2 were provided prior to the presentation of the prehabilitation, while the responses to Questions 3 through 6 were provided subsequent to the aforementioned presentation.

a willingness to participate. However, when they were told that they would actually have to undergo surgery, they become anxious. Despite the understanding of its benefits, high levels of anxiety may reduce the motivation to engage in prehabilitation and may prevent participation in it. At such times, the support of family members and loved ones is important. Many members among the healthy community, i.e., family members of patients, were interested and willing to participate in prehabilitation when the content of

prehabilitation was explained to them. Therefore, involving both the patients and their families may increase participation in prehabilitation.

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### Authors Contributions

M.S.: data collection, and writing the paper; M.I.: data interpretation, and revision of the manuscript; M.K.: data collection and revision of the manuscript; all authors read and approved the final manuscript.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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