

C114

**A randomised controlled trial of relaxation training to reduce hot flushes after breast cancer**

D R Fenlon<sup>1</sup>, J C Corner<sup>1</sup>, J S Haviland<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom; <sup>2</sup>Institute of Cancer Research, Sutton, Surrey, United Kingdom

**Aims:** Around 65% of women treated for breast cancer experience menopausal difficulties and 96% of these have hot flushes. For many women flushes can be severe and debilitating. Treatment options for the management of menopausal difficulties are limited by risks of cancer recurrence and as yet there are few acceptable and effective strategies available to relieve hot flushes. This study was set up to test the effectiveness of relaxation training to reduce hot flushes.

**Procedures:** A randomised, controlled trial was conducted on 150 women comparing a single relaxation training session (comprising stress management, muscle relaxation and deep breathing techniques) against usual care. Non parametric tests were conducted on the change in incidence and severity of flushes. Changes in distress due to flushes, problem factor and interference to daily life were measured (Hunter and Liao 1995) as well as STAI and FACT-ES quality of life. Significance levels were set at  $p < 0.01$  to allow for multiple testing.

**Major findings:** Relaxation was found to be an effective intervention, which significantly reduced the incidence of hot flushes by 22% ( $p < 0.001$ ), the severity of flushes ( $p < 0.01$ ) and the distress caused by flushes ( $p = 0.01$ ).

**Significance and conclusions:** Relaxation training may be a useful component of self-management measures for women who have had breast cancer in order to reduce the incidence and distress caused by hot flushes.