

# A randomized wait-list controlled trial on the use of Emotional Freedom Techniques as an intervention strategy to reduce patient reported cognitive complaints in cancer survivors (EMOTICON)

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## Introduction:

Cancer patients often report **cognitive complaints** which can still be present long after therapy has been completed. This was first described as “chemobrain”, assuming the cognitive complaints were caused by chemotherapy. However, cognitive complaints can also be present in patients who did not receive chemotherapy. Other factors, such as distress, worry, insomnia and fatigue can also contribute to these complaints.

## Research question:

In this randomized wait list controlled study, the use of **Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)** as intervention to reduce cognitive complaints in cancer patients will be investigated.

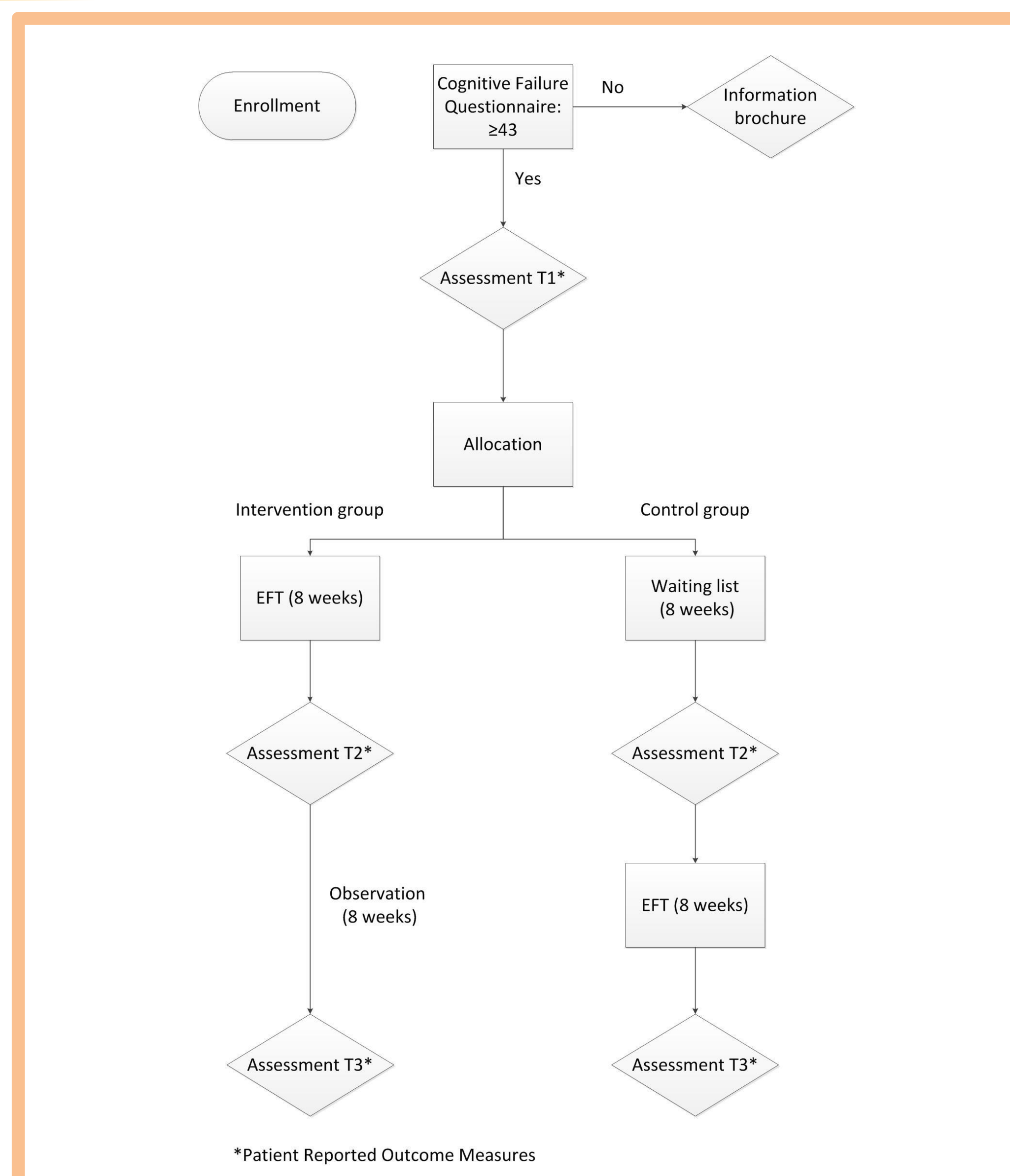
EFT is a brief and easy to learn exposure therapy with a somatic and cognitive component. This **self-help tool** involves tapping specific **acupressure** points on the side of the hand, the face, torso and top of the head; while a problem is addressed out loud. EFT has already been used in several psychological disorders including fear and depression. Recently, it was implemented in a study in women with breast cancer, effectively reducing hot flushes, night sweats, fatigue and mood changes.

## Subjects & Methods:

We aim to include 118 cancer patients at the **general hospital Groeninge, general hospital Klinka and University hospital Brussels**. Patients who were not treated in the above mentioned centers can also enter the study. The trial started in October 2016.

Inclusion criteria

- ≥ 18 years
- All cancer types
- Received treatment with **curative** intent
- **Suffer from significant subjective cognitive complaints (Cognitive Failure Questionnaire ≥43)**



## Results:

So far, 59 patients have been included.

Quotes from EFT sessions:

*“After an EFT sequence, I feel much calmer and it helps me ease my troubled mind.”*

*“After these 8 weeks of daily EFT practice, I feel a remarkable improvement of my memory and concentration that even my husband noticed too.”*

## Clinical relevance/implementation:

With this project, we wish to investigate a safe and simple self-help tool to relieve cancer patients of their cognitive complaints. **The technique is quick to learn and easy to implement in daily practice.**

## Acknowledgements: