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The Effects of 12-Weeks of Exercise on Cancer-Related Fatigue Over Time in Cancer Patients

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Current evidence suggests that exercise is safe and well-tolerated by cancer patients and has potential to mitigate cancer-related fatigue (CRF), a distressing and undermanaged adverse event. This study evaluated if supervised group exercise for 60 minutes (aerobic/strength), 2-3 times/week for 12 weeks, can impact CRF over time. FACIT-FS, a self-reported questionnaire, was used to assess CRF in Week 1, 4, 8, and 12. Subgroup analyses of FACIT-FS categorical baseline fatigue levels were also conducted. Participants (N = 35) consisted of adult women (n = 32) and men (n = 3) who were diagnosed with any type of cancer and were receiving treatment or had completed treatment within the last 5 years. All participants showed a significant difference in mean FACIT-FS from Week 1 (M = 37.37, SD = 8.92) to Week 12 (M = 42.89, SD = 8.10), $p < .001$, favoring an improvement in CRF. Participants with baseline moderate-to-severe CRF (n = 11) had the most significant improvement in CRF from Week 1 (M = 26.36, SD = 3.91) to Week 12 (M = 38.36, SD = 6.76), p = < .001. For participants with minimal baseline fatigue (n = 16), increases in mean FACIT-FS still occurred suggesting that exercise can be beneficial to health status in patients not experiencing CRF. Pairwise comparisons showed CRF levels significantly improved from Week 1 (M = 41.00) to Week 8 (M = 45.00, p = .021) and Week 12 (M = 46.23, p = .009) as well as Week 4 (M = 43.53) to Week 12 (M = 46.23, p = .023) suggesting eight weeks is key timepoint when benefits of exercise begin to occur and continue over time. This study provides strong evidence that supervised group exercise is beneficial in mitigating CRF and improving patient overall well-being.

Keywords

cancer-related fatigue, supervised group exercise, quality of life, FACIT-FS

Conflict of Interest & Ethical Approval

yes

Abstract submitters declaration

yes

Author: Dr MIDDLETON, PH.D., Deborah (Concordia University-St Paul, Minnesota; Senior Medical Education Director, Hematology/Oncology, Global WebMD/Medscape Education)

Co-authors: CHIPMAN, ACSM GEI, ACSM/ACS CET, Jadyn (Exercise and Stress Management Manager; Wellness House-Hinsdale, Illinois); Dr OSTREM, PH.D., Joseph D. (Associate Professor, Department of Biology & Biochemistry; University of Northwestern - Saint Paul, Minnesota); Dr ROSS, PH.D., Stephen (Professor of Kinesiology; Assistant Director - Doctorate in Kinesiology Programs; Director - Institutional Review Board; Concordia University-St. Paul, Minnesota)

Presenter: Dr MIDDLETON, PH.D., Deborah (Concordia University-St Paul, Minnesota; Senior Medical Education Director, Hematology/Oncology, Global WebMD/Medscape Education)

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