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Efficacy of a group-based videoconference intervention to increase physical activity in cancer survivors: A study protocol

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Background and Purpose: Moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity (MVPA; i.e., aerobic and resistance exercise) improves physical function and quality of life for cancer survivors and is associated with reductions in cancer-specific and all-cause mortality. Unfortunately, recent estimates suggest that only 14% of individuals with a cancer history are engaging in the amount of MVPA considered necessary to achieve these health benefits. Thus, there is a need for effective and wide-reaching interventions that can help cancer survivors increase MVPA. Supervised group-based interventions are successful in increasing MVPA among cancer survivors, however, delivering these interventions face-to-face can be resource intensive, and present a barrier in terms of access. Virtually supervised PA interventions (i.e., using videoconferencing) can offer the benefits of real-time supervision and social interaction, while retaining the scalability and reach advantages of other remote delivery modalities.
Methods: This study is a phase II randomized controlled trial to examine the effect of a group-based videoconference intervention to increase MVPA among N=300 post-treatment cancer survivors. Additional outcomes include physical function and quality of life, behavioral mediators and moderators of intervention effects, and loneliness. Participants will be randomized to the 12-week intervention or an asynchronous comparator group. The intervention will include twice-weekly instructor-led group-based aerobic and resistance exercise, and PA behavior change discussion sessions. Outcomes will be assessed at baseline, post-intervention and six-month follow-up. All study visits and intervention components will be delivered in real time using videoconferencing software. Potential Impact: Videoconferencing has the potential to vastly expand the reach and scalability of supervised exercise interventions, while retaining the key components of accountability and social support. Given the positive impact that aerobic and resistance exercise can have on multiple health outcomes and cancer-survival, if many cancer survivors can achieve and sustain recommended levels of MVPA, the public health impact would be substantial.

Keywords

physical activity; behavior change; virtual; efficacy trial

Conflict of Interest & Ethical Approval

yes

Abstract submitters declaration

yes

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