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Exercise Oncology Starts Here: Innovative Undergraduate Training for Tomorrow's Professionals

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Best practice cancer care supports exercise referrals for all cancer survivors, both during and after treatment. However, with the rapid rise in the number of cancer survivors, the current exercise workforce cannot provide this level of care. Further, although the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) calls for clinicians to include exercise referrals as standard practice in oncology care, oncologist referral rates remain low (< 20%), in large part due to the lack of evidence-based exercise programs. The *Exercise Is Medicine (EIM) Moving Through Cancer* initiative has identified “exercise oncology workforce enhancement” as a focus area to ensure evidence-based exercise programs can feasibly be provided as a standard part of cancer care. To meet this need, specialized training is essential to develop the skills required for exercise professionals to work with people navigating a cancer diagnosis and its associated treatment. Training beyond traditional undergraduate degree programs is typically required to develop this workforce, yet few opportunities exist during undergraduate education to both drive interest in this profession while also helping students to develop these necessary skills. Interestingly, undergraduate programs may offer an ideal opportunity to simultaneously develop the workforce while driving occupational interest in exercise oncology; however, very few programs include cancer-specific training. As such, understanding novel approaches to undergraduate training is critical to develop an exercise oncology workforce able to meet the call of both ASCO and the *EIM Moving Through Cancer* initiative. The CARESLab (Cancer Research in Exercise Science Laboratory) has developed an innovative approach to integrating oncology training into the undergraduate student experience. This presentation will examine the development and implementation of the CARESLab model, identify fresh approaches in the training process of burgeoning exercise oncology professionals, all while exploring the feasibility of the model, lessons learned, and considerations for future exercise oncology workforce development.

Keywords

Workforce Development, Translational Research, Implementation, Undergraduates

Conflict of Interest & Ethical Approval

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