

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Exercise prescription for people with cancer

Experts presenting at a cancer conference today will shed new light on the benefits of exercise for those who have been diagnosed with cancer – with a new study showing that it's actually the patients who feel the most unwell who gain the biggest benefits from getting active.

Associate Professor Prue Cormie from Australian Catholic University will present the findings of her latest study of over 600 patients with over 40 different cancer types at the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia's Annual Scientific Meeting in Sydney.

The study assessed the physical function, fatigue, distress and quality of life of individuals before and after a three-month exercise program, to uncover the impact of exercise.

"Our study showed that the people with cancer who benefit the most from a structured exercise program, are actually those who are the most tired, distressed and physically impaired" says Associate Professor Cormie.

Associate Professor Cormie is concerned that those who are the most likely to benefit from exercise may also be the ones least likely to be recommended it by their doctor.

"We suspect that many clinicians hold back from telling their most unwell patients to exercise, because it seems counterintuitive. This research shows even if patients are experiencing significant side effects and symptoms, exercise can be tailored specifically for them and provide substantial benefits. We need clinicians to change their thinking about when exercise is recommended."

David Mizrahi is an exercise physiologist from UNSW Sydney and Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, who will also present at the conference – showcasing findings from separate research showing that only 30 percent of child and adult survivors of childhood cancer are meeting physical activity recommendations.

"Physical activity is important for everyone, but even more critical for childhood cancer survivors due to the effects of cancer treatment later in life, including an increased risk of diabetes and cardiovascular problems. We know that exercise can mitigate these risks in other populations, and it is likely to reduce these risks in childhood cancer survivors too," Mr Mizrahi says.

Professor Phyllis Butow, President, Clinical Oncology Society of Australia says that the body of evidence around the benefits of exercise is growing – and this the latest research showed that clinicians need to challenge preconceptions about the benefits and prescribe it more often.

"Both studies show a clear need for clinicians to work harder to encourage those who have been diagnosed with cancer to get active. As new evidence emerges about the benefits of

exercise for a wider range of people living beyond cancer, we need to broaden the range of people we prescribe it to.”

**ENDS**

The Clinical Oncology Society of Australia Annual Scientific Meeting session on “*Best of the Best Orals - Supportive Care*” will be held at 11am on 14th November 2017 at the International Convention Centre Sydney, Meeting Room C4.3

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