

## 412 Physical Activity During Cancer Treatment: A Survey of What Australian Cancer Health Professionals Think

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**Background:** Physical activity declines in people treated for cancer and for most exercise never returns to pre-diagnosis levels. Exercise reduces many symptoms and supports maintenance of physical function. Views of Australian oncology health about exercise in cancer patients throughout their disease trajectory are unknown.

**Aim:** To document perceptions of Australian health professionals about exercise in people diagnosed with cancer undergoing treatment.

**Methods:** Across-sectional study design was used to survey Australian healthcare professionals. Members of cancer-related professional and research groups were emailed an invitation including a link to the survey (snowballing recruitment also used). Respondents completed the 50-item survey online. Here we report descriptive statistics.

**Results:** Although 439 started the survey, 392 completed some data (89% participation rate), across 17 disciplines (25% Allied Health, 23% nursing, 15% medical oncology). Most respondents were female (77%), from metropolitan areas (77%), 87% reported engaging in physical activity themselves. They had a mean of 16 years in practice (SD 10.4), and 42% treated all early stage cancers and 43% all advanced stage cancer types.

Majority of professionals agree PA is beneficial (73%), safe (62%) and important (71%) during cancer treatment. They believe their patients are capable of exercising (39%) and recommendations would be well received (44%). Exercise discussion lasting 1–5 min in consultations was reported by 42% of respondents; 30% refer to other exercise services in their hospital. Respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the following as barriers to exercise referrals: patients' physical constraints 22%, patient financial constraints 21%, too much to discuss 18%.

**Conclusion:** Australian oncology health professionals perceive exercise as beneficial, safe, and important to patients, but substantial barriers to them discussing and referring patients to exercise services.