Exercise and Cancer Survivorship: impact on health outcomes and quality of life


Due to continuing improvements in cancer detection and treatment methods, more individuals with cancer are living longer post-diagnosis. As many of these individuals are over 65 years of age, the possible interaction of the cancer itself, their advancing age and treatment side-effects may pose many challenges to their health and well-being. Specifically, many cancer survivors experience reduced quality of life and physical functioning as well as increased levels of fatigue and susceptibility to other chronic conditions.

This book brings together leading researchers from North America and Europe with experience in the cancer exercise field. The initial two chapters of this book describe the cancer “experience” and how exercise may be of general benefit to cancer survivors. The following 11 chapters then focus on presenting stand-alone reviews of the literature on the benefits of exercise for some of the most prevalent cancers, these being breast, prostate, colorectal and lung. Considerable sections of these final 11 chapters also review the evidence for the likely mechanisms underlying the known exercise benefits and the barriers and motives to exercise in cancer survivors. The barriers and motives sections are particularly important as such information is needed for the results of these intervention studies to improve usual care practice.

Each of the 13 chapters concludes with recommendations for usual care and future research as well as a comprehensive reference list that will provide the interested reader with much additional information. While the recommendations of this book regarding the benefits of exercise may be applied with the greatest certainty to breast, prostate, colorectal and lung cancer groups, the emerging evidence for other cancer groups would suggest that these recommendations may be quite applicable to most other cancer types as well.

Overall, I would recommend this book for all health professionals who work with cancer patients and survivors. Exercise instructors and health promotion specialists who may wish to work with cancer survivors would also find this book of great benefit. I hope that this book acts as a stimulus for health professionals, health promotion specialists, exercise instructors and researchers within New Zealand to work together in improving the health and well-being of our cancer survivors. This could be achieved by making exercise a part of usual care for many cancer patients/survivors and to conduct further research in this quickly-developing area.

Justin Keogh
Associate Professor
Person Centred Research Centre & School of Sport and Recreation
Auckland University of Technology, Auckland