Physical Activity Preferences Among a Population-Based Sample of Colorectal Cancer Survivors

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Purpose/Objectives: To identify the key physical activity (PA) programming and counseling preferences of colorectal cancer (CRC) survivors.

Design: Population-based, cross-sectional mailed survey.

Setting: Alberta, Canada.

Sample: 600 CRC survivors.

Methods: CRC survivors randomly identified through the Alberta Cancer Registry in Canada completed a mailed survey (34% response rate).

Main Research Variables: Self-reported PA, medical and demographic variables, and PA preferences.

Findings: Most CRC survivors indicated that they were interested and able to participate in a PA program. The most common PA preferences of CRC survivors were to receive PA counseling from a fitness expert at a cancer center, receive PA information in the form of print materials, start a PA program after cancer treatment, do PA at home, and walk in both the summer and winter. In addition, oncologists and nurses were identified as preferences from whom CRC survivors would like to receive PA information. Chi-square analyses identified that age, education, annual family income, and current PA were the demographic variables most consistently associated with PA preferences.

Conclusions: The majority of CRC survivors expressed an interest in participating in a PA program and key PA preferences were identified. Those preferences may be useful for developing and implementing successful PA interventions for CRC survivors.

Implications for Nursing: Oncology nurses are in a unique position to promote PA for CRC survivors. Therefore, understanding CRC survivor PA preferences is essential to assist nurses in making appropriate PA recommendations or referrals.

Knowledge Translation: Although CRC survivors’ PA participation rates are low, they may have an interest in receiving PA programming and counseling. CRC survivors have indicated a preference to receive PA information from individuals within their cancer support team (e.g., fitness specialist at a cancer center, oncologist, nurses). The PA preferences identified by CRC survivors are important for the development of successful PA interventions.