Exercise Interventions to Manage Fatigue in Women With Gynecologic Cancer: A Systematic Review

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A gynecologic cancer diagnosis affects multiple aspects of a woman’s life, including physical and psychological health status. Gynecologic cancer refers to a malignant condition of the female reproductive system which may include ovary, vulva, vagina, cervix, uterus (womb/endometrial), uterine tube(s), and placenta (Gupta & Rajwanshi, 2013). Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women, and the seventh most common overall cancer (Ferlay et al., 2015). Fitzmaurice et al. (2015) suggested that 1 in 70 women are expected to develop cervical cancer from the time of their birth to age 79 years.

The stage of the cancer and the management options available have significant affects on survival rates. For example, the survival rate of ovarian cancer during a 10-year period is 35%, and more than 55% of the cases are diagnosed at stage III or IV (Macdonald & Palmer, 2014). In the case of endometrial cancer, however, the survival rate during a 10-year period is 78% and the majority of patients are diagnosed at an early stage of the disease (Cancer Research UK, 2015). In the United States, the five-year survival rate is 84% (American Cancer Society, 2018).

Fatigue is a particularly common and troublesome symptom that may affect daily activity levels and negatively alter the quality of life of people diagnosed with cancer (Peters, Goedendorp, Verhagen, Bleijenberg, & van der Graaf, 2016). Cancer-related fatigue (CRF) is defined as “a disturbing, persistent, subjective sense of physical, emotional, and/or cognitive fatigue or exhaustion related to cancer or cancer treatment that is not proportional to recent activity and interferes with usual functioning” (Berger et al., 2015, p. 1012). De Raaf, de Klerk, Timman, Hinze, and van der Rijt (2012) reported that most patients with cancer...