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Award Number: DAMD17-01-1-0628

TITLE: The Effect of a Home-Based Walking Intervention on
Quality of Life, Body Composition, and Estrogen Metabolism in
Postmenopausal Breast Cancer Survivors

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REPORT DATE: September 2004

TYPE OF REPORT: Annual

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: Approved for Public Release;
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20050603 204

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 074-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE September 2004	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Annual (1 Sep 2003 - 31 Aug 2004)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Effect of a Home-Based Walking Intervention on Quality of Life, Body Composition, and Estrogen Metabolism in Postmenopausal Breast Cancer Survivors			5. FUNDING NUMBERS DAMD17-01-1-0628	
6. AUTHOR(S) Sara Wilcox, Ph.D.				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) University of South Carolina Columbia, SC 29208 E-Mail: swilcox@sc.edu			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 Words) Increased incidence of and survival from breast cancer have resulted in growth of the number of women who have survived this disease and are faced with the subsequent consequences of their diagnosis and treatment: Physical activity is a modifiable health behavior that has the potential to address both the emotional and physical needs of women with early stage breast cancer. However, for physical activity to be seen as a viable treatment option, and for a change in routine care to occur, its effectiveness must be determined. Accordingly, the objectives of this pilot study are to; 1) quantify the effect of a 12-week home-based walking intervention on quality of life, body composition, and estrogen metabolism in survivors of breast cancer, and 2) develop and test the feasibility of physical activity intervention materials for future studies in this population. We hypothesize that women randomized to the walking intervention will report higher levels of quality of life, experience less weight gain, and have more favorable estrogen metabolite profiles. The recruitment of participants into this study has not yet been initiated due to challenges in institutional agreements regarding coverage of potential medical expenses incurred by women as a consequence of their participation in this research. However, this issue has been resolved, and we plan to begin recruitment in late November.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS exercise, quality of life, body weight, estrogen metabolism			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 6	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unlimited	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18
298-102

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Introduction

Increased incidence of and survival from breast cancer have resulted in growth of the number of women who have survived this disease and are faced with the subsequent consequences. Diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer are associated with several adverse physical and psychosocial outcomes (e.g., weight gain, reduced physical activity levels, loss of lean body mass, depression, lowered self-esteem). Some of these adverse effects are attenuated after adjuvant treatment ends. However, psychological distress and weight gain may persist, resulting in reduced quality of life and increased risk of recurrence. Physical activity participation may attenuate the adverse effects outlined above and improve hormonal factors that influence breast cancer recurrence (1). Given these benefits, it is remarkable that physical activity programs have not been adapted for breast cancer survivors until very recently. In order for physical activity to be seen as a viable treatment option, and for a change in routine care to occur, its effectiveness must be determined. Accordingly, the objectives of this pilot study are to; 1) quantify the effect of a 12-week home-based walking intervention on quality of life, body composition, and estrogen metabolism in survivors of breast cancer, and 2) develop and test the feasibility of physical activity intervention materials for future studies in this population. We hypothesize that women randomized to the walking intervention will report higher levels of quality of life, experience less weight gain, and have more favorable estrogen metabolite profiles.

Body

DESIGN. Fifty postmenopausal women recently diagnosed with breast cancer will be recruited from the South Carolina Cancer Center (Columbia, SC). Thirty women will be randomized to a 12-week walking intervention and 20 women to a control group. The control group will be offered a walking program following the randomized experiment to allow them benefit from the intervention and improve compliance during the trial. All women will be screened for contraindications to the moderate-intensity walking program (i.e., anemia, immune suppression, extreme fatigue, bone pain, and symptoms of cardiovascular disease and orthopedic problems) and excluded as necessary. The intervention will occur after treatment is completed. Experimental groups will be balanced by stage of breast cancer and treatment type.

INTERVENTION. Participants randomized to the intervention will complete a 12-week home-based walking program using the Stanford model developed and refined by King and colleagues (1). Supervised home-based programs are preferred by most adults (5) and have been shown to be safe even in older ages and the obese. To maximize safety, participants will be instructed to gradually increase their walking duration and intensity. By the eighth week of the intervention, the goal will be to walk for 30-40 minutes, 5 times per week, at a moderate intensity level (i.e., 3-4 mph). Women in the intervention will have an initial in-person counseling session with a health educator that will emphasize physical activity safety (i.e., perceived exertion, warm-up, and cool-down). They also will receive 5 brief telephone calls by a health educator to monitor participant safety and enhance adherence during the 12-week intervention. Adherence will be monitored with self-report logs and pedometers. Dr. Sara Wilcox, a psychologist and Associate Professor in Exercise Science at USC, will oversee the intervention.

OUTCOMES. Quality of life will be measured with the Medical Outcomes Study SF-36 that evaluates eight domains of life quality (e.g., physical, social, bodily pain, mental health). Changes in body mass and composition will be quantified with anthropometric measures and bioelectrical impedance. Estrogen metabolite levels will be measured among half of the overall sample (n=25) from spot urine samples in triplicate using the Estramet 2/16 kit (Immuna Care Corp, Bethlehem, PA). Women in the estrogen sub-study will only be included if they are overweight (i.e., body mass index > 25 kg/m²). The assay is a direct measure of 2-hydroxyestrone and 16alpha-hydroxyestrone. CYP1A2 activity, an enzyme regulating 2-hydroxyestrone formation, will be measured in urine. These markers of estrogen metabolism have been associated with breast cancer risk and physical activity levels. Changes in physical activity will be assessed by questionnaire and an accelerometer (2, 4). Outcomes will be measured at baseline, 6-, and 12-weeks. Availability of these data allow for examination of the effect of the intervention in returning women toward pre-diagnosis levels of physical and psychosocial health.

SUMMARY. This pilot study evaluates the effectiveness of a generalizable physical activity intervention for improving quality of life and two biologic factors associated with prognosis in postmenopausal breast cancer survivors. These data will provide the necessary quantitative estimates of outcome effect sizes that will be used for submission of a larger-scale proposal to rigorously test the hypotheses outlined above. This work has the potential to add an important new treatment option for the growing population of breast cancer survivors.

Key Research Accomplishments

None

Reportable Outcomes

None

Conclusions

Not yet available.

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