

Supplementary Table I. Study characteristics of the papers appraised and included in the systematic review (n = 19).

Ref. no.	CASP Score	Aim	Patients	Intervention	Data Collection	Analysis Type	Findings (themes)
[29]	7	To investigate how a group intervention program designed for men with cancer affects their sense of wellbeing and their ability to cope with the physical, psychological and social consequences of living with cancer	n = 17 (17 men) Mean age = 57 (range 21–71) Mixed cancer diagnoses Treatment status not reported	Group intervention 13 × 2 h sessions 16 weeks Various moderate and low intensity exercise	Focus group + participant observations	Thematic	- Motivation (reasons for enrollment) - Social obligation: new energy, humor and self-esteem - Increased wellbeing and bodily awareness
[30]	7	To examine the nature of fatigue in cancer patients with advanced stages of disease undergoing chemotherapy participating in a multidimensional exercise intervention	n = 23 (9 men) Mean age not stated (median age = 40; range 18–63) Mixed cancer diagnoses During treatment (chemo-therapy)	Group intervention 4 times/week 6 weeks High intensity exercise (cardiovascular and resistance) and low intensity exercise	Semi-structured individual interviews on three occasions (prior, during and post-intervention)	Thematic	- Physical debilitation and fatigue as motivation for joining the program - From chemotherapy-induced fatigue to exercise-induced fatigue - Increased strength and energy
[31]	8	To explore how young pre-cancer athletes experience disease- and treatment-related physical fitness, appearance and identity changes while undergoing chemotherapy and participating in a group exercise intervention.	n = 22 (13 men) Mean age not stated (median age = 28; range 18–40). Mixed cancer diagnoses During treatment (chemo-therapy)	Group intervention 4 times/week 6 weeks High intensity exercise (cardiovascular and resistance) and low intensity exercise	Semi-structured individual interviews on two occasions (baseline and post-intervention)	Thematic (descriptive phenomenology)	- Pre-illness: the young athletes were enthusiastic and proud of their sculpted bodies – their sport defined their identity - At baseline: cancer and chemotherapy overpower the body and one's identity - Six weeks following the intervention program: partially winning over the sick body, increased body acceptance and physical control – reformulating one's identity

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Supplementary Table I. Continued.

Ref. no.	CASP Score	Aim	Patients	Intervention	Data Collection	Analysis Type	Findings (themes)
[32]	7	To explore feasibility, health benefits and barriers of exercise in former sedentary patients with advanced stage lung cancer undergoing chemotherapy	n = 15 (7 men) Mean age = 66 (range 45–80) Lung cancer During treatment (chemotherapy)	Group intervention 2 times/week (supervised) + 3 times/week (home based) 6 weeks Cardiovascular and resistance training + relaxation	Semi-structured, individual interviews + semi-structured focus group interviews	Thematic	- The diagnosis and the shock - No interest in exercise and team sport pre-illness - Motivation to participate: Experienced physical weakness, fatigue, pain, and an unspoken desire to combat the illness through own actions - Benefits: Strength training helps the weak body achieve wellbeing, despite fatigue, soreness and pain - Fitness training – it is tough and a challenge - Relaxation training – a much needed break - A paradox – so tired but more energetic - The importance of exercising in a group with those in a similar circumstance - Exercising at home – “Great instructions but I don’t have the discipline to exercise alone” - The exercise program’s volume, content and duration
[33]	9	To explore muscle and joint pain experienced by women with breast cancer receiving adjuvant chemotherapy and concurrently participating in an exercise intervention	n = 15 (0 men) Mean age not stated (median age = 44; range 29–57) Breast cancer During treatment (adjuvant chemotherapy; after surgery)	Group intervention 4 times/week 6 weeks High intensity exercise (cardiovascular and resistance) and low intensity exercise	Semi-structured, individual interviews on two occasions (pre- and post-intervention)	Pheno-menolo-gical	- Exercise despite pain - Cogitated pain management - Abrupt pain – predominant side effect - The adapted training - No immediate exacerbation of pain
[26]*	9	To explore beliefs and experiences related to participation in football, and behaviors and interactions during football	n = 26 (26 men) Mean age = 67 (range 58–74) Prostate cancer During treatment (androgen deprivation treatment)	Group intervention 2–3 times/week 12 weeks football training	Focus group interviews + patient observations	Frame-work	- Motivational drivers (Physical degeneration and psychological distress; An urge for action; Professional facilitation; The prospect of knowledge; The attractions of football) - United in sport (The inner child comes out to play; Interdependency through bodily struggle; Locker room man talk; The role of the team captain) - Confirmation of own capacity (Healthy in a diseased body; Approval of the pitch)

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Supplementary Table I. Continued.

Ref. no.	CASP Score	Aim	Patients	Intervention	Data Collection	Analysis Type	Findings (themes)
[23]*	7	To provide an in-depth description of women's experiences with exercising during or after their breast cancer treatments	n = 45 (0 men) Mean age = 53 (range = 32–64) Breast cancer During and/or after treatment (chemo-therapy)	Individual Frequency unknown 6 months access to health club facility and 12 personal training sessions (cardiovascular and resistance training)	In-depth interviews + e-mail journals	Thematic	- Psychological benefits (Gaining control; Respite from cancer; Moving forward; Managing emotions) - Physical benefits (Affirming healthy status; Rehabilitation; Feeling better; Rebuilding and reclaiming their body) - Social benefits
[34]	8	To explore advanced rectal cancer patients' perceptions of quality of life during participation in a pre-surgery exercise program	n = 10 (3 Men) Mean age = 58 (range 46–74) Rectal cancer Before surgery (after chemo-therapy)	Training in pairs 3 times/week 6 weeks Cycle ergometer (cardiovascular interval training)	Semi-structured, individual interviews on three occasions (baseline, midway and post-intervention)	Hermeneutic phenomenology	- Increased vitality - A positive attitude - Enhanced social connections - A strong sense of purpose
[21]*	7	To explore the experiences of women undergoing treatment for breast cancer who had taken part in a supervised group exercise trial	n = 36 (0 men) Mean age = 53 (range 40–76) Breast cancer During treatment	Group intervention 2 times/week 12 weeks Various high- and low intensity exercise	Semi-structured focus group interviews	Thematic	- A specialist exercise class: tailored to your needs and no need for explanation - The group context: interaction, support and sharing information - Does the group aspect of the exercise intervention serve a similar function to cancer support groups? - Barriers related to gender and identity (Appearance and body image; Women's social roles) - Return to work (RtW) and work performance (Perceived consequences of cancer and treatment for RtW and work performance; Experiences of support from supervisors and the occupational physician) - Physical exercise program after treatment (Experiences with the exercise program; Perceived effects of the exercise program) - Perceived link between physical exercise and work (Perceived influence of physical exercise on RtW and work performance; Perceived influence of RtW on physical exercise)
[35]	9	To explore cancer survivors' experiences with 1) return to work, 2) a physical exercise program after treatment, and 3) the perceived link between physical exercise and work	n = 10 (1 man) Mean age = 56 (range 39–60) Mixed cancer diagnoses After treatment (chemo-therapy)	Group intervention 2 times/week 12 weeks Cycle ergometer and weight lifting (cardiovascular and resistance training)	Semi-structured, individual interviews	Thematic	- Return to work (RtW) and work performance (Perceived consequences of cancer and treatment for RtW and work performance; Experiences of support from supervisors and the occupational physician) - Physical exercise program after treatment (Experiences with the exercise program; Perceived effects of the exercise program) - Perceived link between physical exercise and work (Perceived influence of physical exercise on RtW and work performance; Perceived influence of RtW on physical exercise)

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Supplementary Table I. Continued.

Ref. no.	CASP Score	Aim	Patients	Intervention	Data Collection	Analysis Type	Findings (themes)
[36]	8	To explore patients' perspectives on how and to what extent a rehabilitation program had met their needs	n = 23 (2 men) Mean age = 52 (range 38–67) Mixed cancer diagnoses After treatment	Group intervention 2 times/week 3 months Cardiovascular and resistance training (+ psychosocial activities)	Focus group interviews	Thematic	- Expectations about the rehabilitation program - Influence on quality of life - Group format - Composition of program - Evaluation of physical training sessions - Evaluation of psychosocial sessions - Participants' recommendations for improvements to the program - Most valued aspects of program - Impact on physical appearance and fitness - Influence on QoL - Peer support
[24]*	6	To investigate how tailored exercise is experienced by cancer survivors	n = 25 (0 men) Mean age = 54 (range 43–67) Breast cancer After treatment (chemo-therapy)	Group intervention 1 time/week (supervised) + 3 times/week (home based) 12 months Cardiovascular exercise	Semi-structured focus group interviews	Phenomenological	- A positive attitude - A sense of personal empowerment - A sense of personal meaning - Provides social support - Provides a reference group - Provides a user-friendly place to exercise - Assists with physical rehabilitation - Recommendations based on positive benefits - Motivation - The influence of having cancer - Group norms
[22]*	7	To examine the psychosocial benefits associated with an exercise club specifically designed for cancer chemotherapy patients	n = 9 (3 men) Mean age not stated (age range 57–74) Mixed cancer diagnoses During or after treatment (chemo-therapy)	Group intervention 2 times/week Unlimited Varying exercise using gym equipment	In-depth interviews	Thematic	- A positive attitude - A sense of personal empowerment - A sense of personal meaning - Provides social support - Provides a reference group - Provides a user-friendly place to exercise - Assists with physical rehabilitation - Recommendations based on positive benefits - Motivation - The influence of having cancer - Group norms
[37]	9	To examine group cohesion and changes in quality of life in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy who participated in a group exercise program	n = 55 (20 men) Mean age not stated (median age = 42; range 18–63) Mixed cancer diagnoses During treatment (chemo-therapy)	Group intervention 4 times/week 6 weeks High intensity exercise (cardiovascular and resistance) and low intensity exercise	Focus group interviews + questionnaires (mixed methods)	Thematic	- A positive attitude - A sense of personal empowerment - A sense of personal meaning - Provides social support - Provides a reference group - Provides a user-friendly place to exercise - Assists with physical rehabilitation - Recommendations based on positive benefits - Motivation - The influence of having cancer - Group norms

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Ref. no.	CASP Score	Aim	Patients	Intervention	Data Collection	Analysis Type	Findings (themes)
[27]*	8	To explore the experiences of advanced disease cancer patients participating in a structured, group-based exercise intervention while undergoing chemotherapy	n = 5 (2 men) Mean age = 42 (range 28–52). Mixed cancer diagnoses (advanced disease) During treatment (chemo-therapy)	Group intervention 4 times/week 6 weeks High intensity exercise (cardiovascular and resistance) and low intensity exercise	Patient diaries	Phenomenological and narrative	(Re)gaining a sense of agency and shared self-reliance - Shifting position - Overcoming and surprise - Pleasure/Excitement - Expectations and hopes - Self-surveillance - Daily structure - Monitoring and reflection - Ubiquitous anxiety - Negotiated strength - Challenged stories - Taking desired actions Demonstration and manifestation of illness resistance and self-determination - A new agenda - An act of autonomy - Goal setting - Prioritizing - Tamed fear
[28]*	7	To describe post-treatment cancer survivors' lived experience of long-term maintenance of physical activity	n = 23 (6 men) Mean age not stated (median age = 50; range 29–70) Mixed cancer diagnoses After treatment (chemo-therapy)	Group intervention 1 time/week 12 months High intensity exercise (+ expert presentations and individual coaching)	Semi-structured focus group interviews	Systematic text condensation	- Perception of the group - Sense of belonging - Commitment - A secure and caring setting - A life-empowering group as a setting for enhancing coping - Qualifications of those who led the group - The gym as an unsuitable setting - Another theme - Present needs for provision of group exercise program
[25]*	8	To understand the meaning of a group exercise intervention for palliative cancer patients	n = 5 (3 men) Mean age not stated (age range 42–76) Mixed cancer diagnoses (3–12 months life expectancy)	Group intervention 2 times/week 6 weeks Circuit training	Semi-structured, individual interviews	Phenomenological – hermeneutical	- Baseline: expectations to the DA treatment - Reported experiences with DA (Intermittent effects; Lasting effects; Delayed and slow effects; No effects)
[38]	7	To gain insight into the effects and experiences associated with EPO treatment in combination with an exercise intervention	n = 16 (3 men) Mean age = 50 (age range not stated) Mixed cancer diagnoses During treatment (chemo-therapy + Darbepoetin Alfa)	Group intervention 4 times/week 6 weeks High intensity exercise (cardiovascular and resistance) and low intensity exercise	Semi-structured, individual interviews on three occasions (baseline, midway and post-intervention) + quantitative assessment	Thematic	

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Supplementary Table I. Continued.

Ref. no.	CASP Score	Aim	Patients	Intervention	Data Collection	Analysis Type	Findings (themes)
[39]	8	To understand participants' experiences of an exercise program and preferences regarding its content and delivery	n = 10 (7 men) Mean age = 58 (range 42–74) Colorectal cancer After treatment (surgery and chemo-therapy)	Individual exercise 3 times/week 12 weeks Moderate- to- high-intensity aerobic exercise	Semi-structured, individual interviews	Not stated	- Identified improvements (Confidence; Health and wellbeing; Sense of achievement) - Most enjoyable aspects of the program (Supervised delivery of program) - Preferred time to start the program - Preferences for one-on-one supervised sessions (Considering a supervised group program vs. an unsupervised individualized program)

*Included in meta-synthesis