Exploring how nurses and people with bowel disease discuss physical activity

By

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Abstract

People with bowel disease, namely bowel cancer, ulcerative colitis, and Crohn’s disease benefit physically and psychologically from participating in exercise and physical activity. Exercise also has the potential to reduce the risk of other diseases and comorbidities. Unfortunately, it appears that people with bowel disease are insufficiently active. As individuals with bowel disease interact with different healthcare professionals it is possible that they may receive physical activity advice during their consultations. However, how and the context within which this advice occurs is mostly unknown.

The thesis encompasses three distinct studies that contribute to the exploration of physical activity discussions for people with bowel disease. An inductive thematic analysis of 96 discussions on a public online forum identifies the role of exercise for people with bowel disease and the ways in which they discuss exercise among themselves. This is followed by semi-structured interviews that explore the experience of physical activity counselling with 21 people with bowel disease. Finally, a nursing perspective is gathered through semi-structured interviews with 15 nurses specialising in bowel surgery care.

Results indicate that exercise plays a positive role for those affected with bowel disease; however, physical activity counselling among nurses appeared lacking. Internet forum discussions highlighted the positive experience many people with bowel disease had through participating in exercise activities and discussing exercise among themselves. The semi-structured interviews reiterated the positive role of exercise for people with bowel disease, but concluded that experiencing a lack of physical activity counselling resulted in many unmet needs. The nursing perspective supported the findings that current physical activity counselling practices for people with bowel disease do not meet patient needs. However, the nurses were eager to improve their practices.
Declaration

This thesis is submitted to Bond University in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

This thesis represents my own original work towards this research degree and contains no material that has previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

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Publications

**Poster Presentations**

Hi, who’s been exercising? Investigating how colorectal cancer survivors discuss exercise and physical activity within online discussion forums. Presented at 2014 Gold Coast Health and Medical Research Conference

Nurses experience of discussing exercise and physical activity with patients recovering from bowel disease surgery. Presented at 2016 Gold Coast Health and Medical Research Conference

**Oral Presentation**

What about exercise? How physical activity is discussed online among colorectal cancer patients. Presented at 2014 Australasian Society for Behavioural Health and Medicine 12th Annual Scientific Conference

**Publications that relate to, but did not arise from this thesis**


Ethics Declaration

The research associated with this thesis received ethics approval from the Bond University Human Research Ethics Committee, under reference numbers RO 1651, RO 1961 and RO-1882.

Chapter Six was also approved by The Townsville Hospital and Health Human Research Ethics Committee HREC/15/QTHS/107, Mater Research Governance RG-16-035 and Gold Coast Health Research SSA/15/QGC/188.
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Abbreviations

ACSM – American College of Sports Medicine
AHRQ – Agency for Healthcare Research
CD – Crohn’s Disease
COPD – Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
FSS – Fatigue Severity Scale
fVAS – Fatigue Visual Analogue Score
GPs – General Practitioners
HADS – Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale
IBD – Inflammatory Bowel Disease
ITA – Inductive Thematic Analysis
MASS – Memorial Symptom Assessment Scale
NPAGA – National Physical Activity Guidelines of Australia
QOL – Quality of Life
UC – Ulcerative Colitis