Author's response to reviews

Title: Study Design and Methods for the Breast Cancer and Exercise Trial in Alberta (BETA)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dr Dafne Solera  
Executive Editor  
BMC Cancer  

Dear Dr Solera:

Re: Submission of manuscript to BMC Cancer

Please find attached our manuscript entitled: “Study Design and Methods for the Breast Cancer and Exercise Trial in Alberta (BETA)” that we are submitting to be considered for publication in your journal BMC Cancer as a Study Protocol. This manuscript describes the rationale and methods for a randomized controlled trial that we conducted from 2010-2014. The statistical and laboratory analyses are currently underway and no results from the trial have been published. This protocol has not been published previously nor is it being considered for publication elsewhere while under consideration with your journal.

The purpose of our trial was to compare the effects of a high versus moderate volume of aerobic exercise on proposed biologic intermediate endpoints for breast cancer in previously inactive, postmenopausal women. We randomized 400 women to undertake a year-long, supervised aerobic exercise intervention with a goal to attain five days/week of exercise at 65-75% maximum heart rate reserve. The HIGH group was prescribed 60 minutes/session, totaling 300 minutes/week, while the MODERATE group was prescribed 30 minutes/session, totaling 150 minutes/week which is the minimum amount of activity currently recommended by some agencies for cancer prevention. Our primary intent of the trial is to inform public health guidelines for primary breast cancer prevention. Secondary outcomes from the trial will include impact on quality of life, psychosocial variables, and variables relating to exercise maintenance 12 months post-study completion.

The design and methodology of BETA may be of interest to lifestyle interventionists studying postmenopausal women at risk for cancer. Our manuscript describes in detail the recruitment strategies, incentives and motivational techniques that we used to achieve exceptionally good recruitment and participation rates. We describe in our paper how part of our success in BETA can be attributed to our previous experience conducting the ALPHA trial, a similar study that we conducted from 2003-2007 in 320 women, from which the BETA trial hypotheses evolved.
We look forward to hearing from you regarding the suitability of this manuscript for publication in your journal.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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