Reviewer's report

Title: The use of the Godin-Shephard Leisure-Time Physical Activity Questionnaire in oncology research: A systematic review

Version: 2
Date: 7 January 2015

Reviewer: Siobhan Phillips

Reviewer's report:

General Summary
This study examines the use of the GLTEQ in cancer survivors including the purpose for usage, item content, scoring methods, and validity evidence. While this is an interesting paper that makes a contribution to the literature, I think it could be improved by making the purpose clearer, making it more concise and keeping the language consistent throughout.

Minor Revisions
General
1. Please carefully proofread the manuscript for typos as several were found throughout.
2. Please be consistent with your terminology throughout. I had to re-read and refer to earlier sections quite often to make sure I fully understood what was being discussed.

Introduction
3. Page 3, 1st paragraph: I think the last 2 sentences could be switched around to make it flow better.
4. Page 4, Line 2: “do” should be “does” and “have” should be “has.”
5. Page 5, line 9: researcher’s and clinician’s should be researchers’ and clinicians’.

Methods
6. Page 7, first paragraph: Please make it clear that line 1-11 are the intended scoring and cut-off values, but that many studies alter these items or scoring methods and that you were evaluating these variations. Please also include the exact classifications used for the measurement unit scores instead of adding etc., to the description.
7. Page 7, lines 11-15: Please be consistent with your terminology. Rather than using type of questions, please say item content and instead of measurement unit use scoring. It would be helpful to the reader to pick one term and stick to it throughout.
8. Page 8, lines 3-6: I would delete this sentence unless the criterion classification is assessed. If yes, please revise so that it is apparent why this information is included. Otherwise, it is distracting.
9. Page 8, lines 10-11: Instead of saying “were retrieved”, I might say that only intervention studies that randomly assigned cancer survivors… were included in this classification.

10. Page 10, lines 8-13. The effect size validity estimates are described as being defined as trivial, small, medium or large, originally, but then moderate is used as the descriptor when discussing differences by frequency/duration. Please be consistent. I might also use the term effect size rather than validity estimate in this section to be clear what you are referring to.

Results

11. Page 10, line 21: Why not just replace “it” with “the kappa coefficient” rather than using the parentheses?

12. Page 12, line 16: Inquire should be inquiry.

13. Page 14, line 2: missing the word “to”

Discussion

1. Page 18, line 22-23: this sentence is not grammatically correct and seems to be missing words.

Major Revisions

General

1. Why did the authors choose to exclude all of 2014 from their review?
2. I think the manuscript, in general, is rather wordy and think it could be made more concise to fit in some additional important details including some brief info about the search methods.
3. 5. Page 4, lines 8-9: There seems to be a word missing.
4. 

Abstract

5. 1. Please provide some clarification of what the GLTEQ is being used to rank or classify in the background section.

Introduction

6. Page, 4, line 3. How do the authors anticipate this “reaching” cancer survivors? Would administered be a more appropriate term?
7. Page 4, lines 5-6: I think it is important to clarify that the GLTEQ is recommended as one of the potential measures of PA, since several other measures are also listed on the DCEG website.
8. Page 4, line 12: Please provide some examples of why you might expect measurement properties to differ in cancer survivors v. general population. I think this is important to the whole purpose of the paper. Otherwise, why does it matter if it has been validated in this population?
9. Page 5, line 5: Again, I think the authors need to define what they mean by “ranking and classification purposes.”
10. Page 5, lines 7-8: The authors state in lines 2-3 of this page that the measurement quality of the GLTEQ has not been specifically assessed among cancer survivors. If this is the case, then why bother with iii? Please clarify.

11. I know space is limited, however, I think one important point to highlight in the introduction is the importance of this measure in terms of assessment in clinical practice. If the GLTEQ is a widely used, valid, reliable measure, it could result in a number of opportunities for data collection, patient monitoring/surveillance and survivorship care planning as well as outcomes and practice-based/pragmatic research. This may be particularly important given the research on PA and cancer survivorship as it could provide a unique opportunity to provide rich, reliable data on PA in treatment trials and at the population-level throughout the survivorship continuum. I know the authors mention the potential benefits of this measure briefly on page 4, lines 2-3, but feel it could be expanded on to highlight the importance of this paper. I think some of the information in the first full paragraph on page 4 could be condensed as it seems to almost answer one of the research questions (see comment #8, above) and may be more appropriate for the discussion.

Methods

12. Page 6, lines 8-12: I find the parentheses a bit distracting. I think the authors could remove them from the first sentence and then use then move them after and think the authors could move it after the description of ranking and classification to describe the specific purposes.

13. Page 6, lines 17-20: I find these sentences a bit confusing. Did the authors extract this information to create subclasses for the classification purpose? If yes, how did they determine whether the interpretation was relative or absolute? Was this defined by the authors of this study or those of the studies reviewed? Please clarify.

Results


15. Page 11, lines 11-20: I find this very confusing and think it should be broken up into multiple sentences. Additionally, I think it would be better to put the type of study first and then how it is used and would be helpful to include the percentage for each of the categories. (e.g. In studies aimed at identifying the determinants of LTPA, the GLTEQ was most frequently used as a measure of past behavior (XX%), …)

16. Page 12, section starting on line 18: Did any studies use the GLTEQ score/cut-points as intended? Since this was one of the main question, I may include these results here.

Discussion

17. Page 16, line 14: Can the authors provide some examples of ‘well-tested criteria” for classifying participants that could be used?

18. The authors seem to take issue with the inclusion of time spent in activity.
Could this not allow for a more precise estimate of activity participation given that the GLTEQ only asks for bout of 15 minutes or more which could lead people to misclassification of activity level? For example, what if a participant A puts 3 times next to mild activity when they participate in 90 minute sessions for a total of 270 minutes per week whereas participant B puts 7 next to mild when they participate in 15 minute sessions for a total of 105 minutes per week. Participant B would end up with a higher score than participant A, but actually participate in lower levels of activity. I think this is important information and rather than treat this only as a weakness, I think the authors should indicate how this information might be used to understand the measurement properties and validity of the GLTEQ.

19. I think rather than re-iterating the results, the author could be more concise and really help the reader to understand the implications of these findings and future directions.

Conclusion

20. This section really seems to encompass future directions more than conclusion and is misleading. I think this label should only be used for a concise summary of the findings and future directions and the other information should be included in the discussion.

21. The paper ends abruptly. I think this can be fixed by reconfiguring to put the summary at the end and including the rest in the discussion section.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.