Author’s response to reviews

Title: Feasibility of a Combined Aerobic and Cognitive Training Intervention on Cognitive Function in Cancer Survivors: A Pilot Investigation

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Author’s response to reviews:

On behalf of the authors who contributed to this investigation, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude for the editor for the constructive feedback on improvement of this manuscript. We have responded to all comments and have completed a more thorough revision that should better reflect the suggestions and comments, thereby improving the quality of the manuscript.

Gratefully,

Dr. Brent M. Peterson

* the study was not powered for statistical testing, can you please report summary statistics and confidence intervals rather than p-values.

-Tables with statistical information (5 and 6) have been updated with summary data and p values have been removed and replaced with pre & post values with SD. While the authors do agree that power is a limitation in this study, the authors are requesting that some statistical information
regarding pre-to-post analyses still be reported in the text. Preliminary findings should help aim future studies that may utilize this model as they do not contradict the current literature consensus. In addition, the results should also aid practitioners who work with cancer survivors on a daily basis. For example, the results from the aerobic training only group provides important information that supports what the literature suggests about aerobic exercise positively impacting cognitive function. In a practical sense, a practitioner working with cancer survivors would see this and know that aerobic training is a beneficial and cost effective exercise modality that can help attenuate CRCI.

* Please report statistics on recruitment rates, reasons exclusions, etc.

- Unfortunately, there are no statistical data available to describe the precise rates of recruitment. The University of Northern Colorado Cancer Rehabilitation Institute receives walk-in and referrals of cancer patients from regional oncologists when they have new patients in need of their services. The institute averages approximately 3-5 new patients per week, however, there are times when no new patients come in for assessments. When patients come to the institute they are prescreened by front office staff for their potential participation in studies that are occurring. Patients are then screened further in-person by PI’s before signing Informed Consent forms.

- Unfortunately, there are no statistical data available on reasons for being excluded from the study other than what is presented in the manuscript as participants had to meet the entire inclusion criteria to be eligible for study. Documentation of exact reasons needed to be generalized so as not to not potentially violate HIPAA guidelines with personal information, as some of the reasons were quite personal and very specific to the individual. For example, one of the exclusion criteria was an alcohol or chemical dependence. Some individuals mentioned that this was a significant issue in their lives that was very personal and were concerned that if it was presented somehow, it might become acknowledged among other cancer patients training at the institute. Many cancer patients also experience one or more of the criteria utilized for exclusion since they are often side-effects of cancer. Because of this, investigators of this study did not aim to quantify particular reasons for exclusion other than they either qualified or not. However, the Participants and Study Selection section has been updated to better detail participants characteristics, exclusion criteria, and adherence.
* there are also many sections of the consort checklist that have been checked, but the details are scarce, please provide more details on the setting, exclusion criteria, primary and secondary outcomes.

The authors believe that updates throughout the paper should better address the concerns of the editor with regard to added details on setting, exclusion criteria, and outcomes. The CONSORT checklist has also been updated to reflect changes to the manuscript.