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Qualitative Analysis of Patient Comments Regarding Adherence to an Exercise Oncology Rehabilitation Program

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INTRODUCTION: Previously, we showed that medical professionals are the most effective referrals to exercise oncology rehabilitation programs. We also identified four themes as to why patients continue to participate in such programs with personal results identified as most important. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study was to identify more clearly those factors that promoted adherence within the four general themes of personal results (46%), the trainer (28%), not yet meeting their goals (23%), and family influence (3%) as reasons for remaining in an exercise oncology rehabilitation program. **METHODS:** Within the four themes, patient comments were re-analyzed and categorized to determine more specific response patterns to clarify the motivation of the patient to continue with their respective program. **RESULTS:** Four major sub themes were identified: physical health, mental/emotional health, the trainer/facility staff, and progress/success achieved. Of these sub themes, across all 4 original themes, 39% of patients referenced their physical health while 7% mentioned their improved mental health as reasons for remaining in the program. 34% noted the role of the trainer with approximately 14% specifically linking the trainer with their progress/success in the program. Separately, approximately 20% identified their progress/improvements as the reason to continue in the program. **CONCLUSIONS:** While previously and currently presented data report that physical health and improvements recognized by the patient are primary motivators to maintain adherence to the exercise program, this study found that the trainer/staff of the facility also play a significant role in maintaining enrollment, and therefore, adherence to the rehabilitation program. It is likely the progress/improvements identified by the patients are most likely a result of the work of the trainer/facility staff. Therefore, combining these sub-themes, we conclude that the trainer/facility staff is the most important factor in building patient confidence, trust, and most importantly, adherence to the program.