TEAM PHOENIX TALKS: MOTIVATIONAL EFFECTS OF TRIATHLON TRAINING AMONG BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS
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Significance and Purpose: Breast cancer is the most common cancer for US women. Through the advancements in early detection and treatment options, more women are surviving breast cancer. With increased survivorship (living with or beyond breast cancer), improving quality of life (QOL) may be a challenge for some women. Research has shown that exercise during and post-cancer treatment has improved QOL for breast cancer survivors. Yet, few studies have examined motivational factors influencing exercise initiation and maintenance among breast cancer survivors. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to examine perceived motivation for participating in a triathlon for breast cancer survivors.

Theoretical Framework: Stages of Change Model was the foundation for this study. In this model, an individual’s motivation to make a behavioral change is analyzed. Five behavioral changes are examined in the model: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. For this study, preparation, action, and maintenance were the focus.

Method: IRB approval was obtained. A convenience sample of breast cancer survivors, who trained and competed together (Team Phoenix) in a triathlon, were recruited. Participants consented and 3 focus groups were conducted. The women discussed their experiences in participating in Team Phoenix. Focus groups were audio-taped and the tapes were transcribed. SPSS 19.0 was used to summarize demographic data. Content and thematic analyses were used to analyze transcripts independently. Like statements and phrases were coded. Themes emerged after discussions between researchers. Follow-up individual phone interviews conducted 3-4 months post triathlon. Results: Eleven women participated in 1 of 3 focus groups: Normal BMI (n =2), overweight BMI (n = 4), and obese BMI (n = 5). Mean year of survivorship was 4.65 years. Four themes emerged: Part of a Team, Everyone Had a Story, Not Really Exercise, What Do We Do Now. Phone interviews are currently being conducted. Data collection and analysis of these interviews will be complete prior to the conference.

Conclusions: The study is unique because it examines motivational influences to engaging in an exercise regimen from breast cancer survivors’ perspectives. The findings demonstrate to nurses and other healthcare providers the willingness of survivors to improve QOL through exercise. The findings from the follow-up interviews will provide insight into factors influencing motivational maintenance related to exercise.