

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

**Second Baseline
Paper Published!**

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**Check out our
website!**

Message from the Investigators

We hope this newsletter finds you well. As winter is now upon us, we hope you were able to enjoy the lovely summer and fall weather we had.

In this edition of the newsletter, we highlight details from the second baseline paper which was recently published! We also profile two participants who recently came and completed the testing for the last time as we are close to finishing the 3YR



follow-ups. Lastly, we profile two individuals who are part of the AMBER team. Dr. Jeff Valance, a study investigator, and Diane Cook, an exercise tester in Edmonton who has worked on the study since the beginning and is heading into retirement.

In total, 1353 participants completed their Year 1 assessment. To date, 1141 participants have completed their Year 3 assessment and 809 participants have completed their Year 5 assessment.

Thank you again for your participation and commitment to the study!

We hope you have a relaxing and enjoyable holiday season!

AMBER Study Update

We are happy to say that our second baseline paper has been published. This paper relates the activity monitor data to information collected on the questionnaires. See page three for more details! The next paper we are working on will examine how quality of life measures are related to data collected from the fitness testing.

In our last newsletter we mentioned that our grant application to the



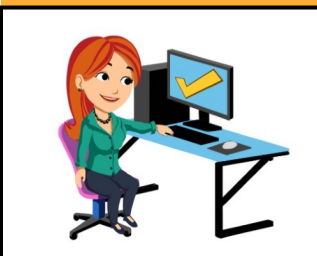
Canadian Institutes of Health Research was not successful. The study team worked hard at rewriting the grant and a new application was submitted in September. We will find out in the New Year whether or not our application is successful.

We continue to move forward with cleaning and

analyzing the Year 1 data. These data will be compared with the baseline data to examine changes in the variety of collected measures.

Lastly, we are fast approaching the next big milestone for the study as we reach the end of our Year 3 follow-ups and completion of our health-related fitness appointments for all participants.

Thank you to everyone who is helping us finish off strong!



AMBER Participants

Hear from two participants who completed the 3YR follow-up!

CALGARY



Calgary participant Fran M.

What were you hoping to gain from participating in the study?

My final assessment was an eye opener when I received the results. AMBER helped me realize that I need to take more time for myself than others. I was upset that I had procrastinated in exercising. I've always taken care of others. Now is time for me.

I am taking more action to get mobile to improve my health & be more conscientious in what I eat, drink & do. I need to be more active! I need to take inventory of my life, stop making excuses (even though I have bad knees) & make changes, so that I can be

around a little bit longer, and be a better me!

Is there a quote or saying that spoke to you during your cancer journey or one that speaks to you currently?

1. Since you're not getting a face lift, keep your chin up!
2. Chin up Princess or the crown slips.
3. Put your big girl panties on & deal with it!

Any tips or tricks that you find help manage stress and/or anxiety during the pandemic & otherwise?

Find something to delve

into! The worst thing possible is to sit & feel sorry for yourself. Try something new! Challenge yourself! Your brain loves it & you may pleasantly surprise yourself!

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience or participating?

You need to know that your hair & your breasts do not define you! You are beautiful on the inside!

Attitude affects Altitude: Do not go down the rabbit hole! Go out and live your best life! I wish you all a wonderful journey! Keep shining like the star you are!

EDMONTON



Edmonton participant Cheryl C.

What were you hoping to gain from participating in the study?

I was concerned that my health and fitness would decline. The study has helped me put my experience into perspective.

Have you made any lifestyle changes after your diagnosis?

I give myself permission to nap and take hot baths more than I did before my diagnosis.

What has been a highlight of participating in the study?

I've used my sessions to reflect on my journey - both positive and negative - and to consider how both my body and mind have coped with the diagnosis and recovery.

What motivates you to be physically active?

- Improved mental health
- Enjoying being out in nature
- Practicing mindfulness when walking, doing yoga, swimming etc.

Any tips or tricks that you find help manage stress and/or anxiety

during the pandemic and otherwise?

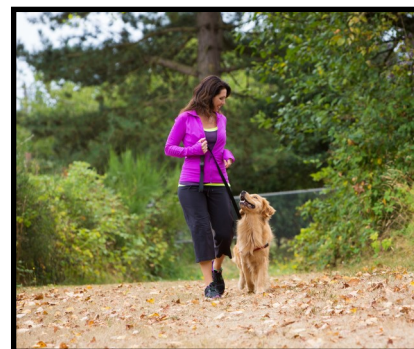
- Being active and getting outside for a walk with the dog
- Taking a bike ride around Hawrelak Park
- Gardening
- Taking a regular mental health day from work has been helpful
- Using Zoom to connect with a friend or family member that you are missing

Hot off the Press! Second AMBER Baseline Paper

We are excited to present the next baseline paper that compares physical activity and sedentary behavior measured by the activity monitors to the quality of life data. It was recently published in the American Cancer Society's journal, *Cancer*. What separates this paper from many others in the field is the unique time point in which these data were collected as it focuses on the time after surgery and prior to the start of treatment. Some studies have suggested quality of life and fatigue profiles are poorest at the pretreatment time point.

Approximately 1,400 women wore devices to capture daily activity patterns including physical activity, sitting time & step counts. Below are some of the findings:

- ✓ Moderate and vigorous intensity physical activity + higher step counts were strongly associated with better quality of life & less fatigue
- ✓ Among women who had poorer quality of life and fatigue, even light intensity activity was helpful
- ✓ Physical activity and steps overall looked to be more important for better quality of life & less fatigue compared to time sitting
- ✓ Among women that reported substantial fatigue, reducing time spent sitting appeared to be important



At a time point when a lot of patients may be taking it easy, and relaxing waiting for the start of treatment, these new data suggest that all types of physical activity may help women by improving quality of life and reducing fatigue. A full copy of the paper can be found on our website - [click here](#)

AMBER Investigator - Dr. Jeff Vallance

Dr. Jeff Vallance is a Professor in the Faculty of Health Disciplines at Athabasca University in Alberta. He currently holds a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Health Promotions and Chronic Disease Management and a former Population Health Investigator Award from Alberta Innovates - Health Solutions & Canadian Institutes of Health Research New Investigator.

His research program explores physical activity, sedentary behavior and psychosocial health outcomes across the chronic disease context. He is currently engaged in several national and international studies focusing on the health consequences of physical activity and sedentary behavior among cancer survivors, and individuals with other chronic diseases including stroke, renal disease & gastrointestinal diseases.

Dr. Vallance and Dr. Kerry Courneya (another AMBER study investigator) published *Fight Breast Cancer with Exercise*, one of the few books available designed to help breast cancer survivors start and maintain physical activity.



Exercise Tester Profile - Thank you Diane!



Diane Cook, the AMBER Research Coordinator in Edmonton, is retiring at the end of this year after working over 15 years in cancer research. Diane graduated from the University of Alberta (U of A) with a Bachelor of Physical Education degree which included a concentration in Athletic Therapy & Exercise Physiology. Prior to working in research, Diane was involved in coaching figure and power skating, working in the field of Athletic Therapy with MacEwan and Concordia Universities, and in the field of exercise rehabilitation with various physiotherapy clinics and Millard Health.

As a breast cancer survivor, Diane became interested in the effects of exercise on cancer. She learned about Dr. Kerry Courneya's exercise and cancer research at a conference and started working for him at the U of A in 2005. She has worked on various projects as the Research Coordinator in the Behavioral Medicine Lab

namely AMBER and the CARE Trial, which looked at aerobic and resistance exercise in breast cancer survivors receiving chemotherapy. For AMBER, Diane helped Dr. Courneya and the study team put together the original CIHR grant application in 2010 and started recruiting for the study in 2012. She capped things off this past month testing the last 3YR participant in Edmonton.

In Diane's words, "I feel fortunate to have been given the opportunity to run these two breast cancer studies for Dr. Courneya and Dr. Friedenreich. Having had breast cancer, this has been a rewarding vocation. I have worked with an amazing group of people over the years which has included staff at the Cross Cancer Institute and Behavior Medicine Lab, many awesome students and, most of all, the participants in the studies. What a strong group of inspiring women who have contributed to all of this research!"

In retirement, Diane is looking forward to spending more time with family and friends along with enjoying her interests of gardening, travelling, photography and ancestry work.

Here are a few words of thanks from the primary investigators on AMBER, Drs. Courneya and Friedenreich:

I would like to thank Diane for all of her hard work in my lab over the past 17 years. We could not have conducted the AMBER study without her. I know many study participants commented on the support and compassion they received from Diane over the years. She will be greatly missed by our lab & the study participants. We wish her all the best during her much deserved retirement! Thanks Diane!

- Dr. Kerry Courneya

Diane has been an invaluable member of our research team over the past 17 years. Her in-depth knowledge of exercise physiology has helped guide the design and conduct of numerous research studies. In addition, her empathetic, calm and kind approach has been a key factor in ensuring excellent rapport with our study participants and helped ensure great adherence and retention in our studies. She will be very missed by us, however, she can now focus on her own pursuits and activities in her well-deserved retirement. We wish Diane all the best and thank her sincerely for her multiple contributions to our research programs.

- Dr. Christine Friedenreich



AMBER Study Contact Information

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