Raviva: a Belgian PA program for people with cancer and/or cancer survivors

Purpose:
- To identify the difficulties encountered by the Raviva instructors during their practice
- To determine their expectations and needs for specific education
- To propose a suitable in-service training day

Background:
- PA improves quality of life and reduces mortality among cancer survivors (Beasley, 2012; Fong, 2012)
- Raviva: Belgian PA program for people with cancer and/or cancer survivors (Fondation contre le Cancer)
- Raviva instructors: inconstant professional preparation and experiences have been underlined by the program’s leaders
- PA instructors should be educated in how to work with cancer survivors (ACSM, 2012)
- No compulsory specific training for PA instructors in Belgium

Results:
- Instructors face difficulties during their PA sessions
  - The most frequent difficulty is to adapt the tasks to their specific population (18/22)
- Almost all instructors expressed interest in the participation to a specific training (21/22)
  - Importance of setting up a training day

Step 1: difficulties and interest in a possible training
- Instructors face difficulties during their PA sessions
  - The most frequent difficulty is to adapt the tasks to their specific population (18/22)
- Almost all instructors expressed interest in the participation to a specific training (21/22)
  - Importance of setting up a training day

Step 2: training content
- Theoretical information:
  - Last news about the Foundation Against Cancer and Raviva
  - Cancer: causes, treatments and consequences
  - PA and cancer: from prevention to social and sports rehabilitation
- Practical activities:
  - Discussion forum: psycho-social aspects of the instructor’s role
  - Practical PA sessions: fitness training, relaxation and aqua-aerobics

Step 3: opinion about the training day
- Overall, participants were satisfied with all activities
- The day helped to highlight instructors’ difficulties and possible solutions (91.7% and 82.8%)
- The day met their goals (90.4%)
- All participants are willing to participate in future trainings

Methods
- Online questionnaire for Raviva instructors (n = 29/56)
- Development and implementation of an in-service training day (n = 43)
- Analysis: observation + questionnaire for instructors

Step 1: opinion about the future content
- Instructors’ opinion about a future training and its content
  - During the training day, the instructors:
    - Would like to receive information about cancer (18/22) and how to supervise this type of activities (21/22)
    - Are ready to actively participate to some practical PA sessions (21/22) and to some participative group discussions (17/22)
  - Other topics requested: relational, social and psychological aspects (13/22), sessions content (10/22) and contraindications (8/22)

Conclusions
- Most instructors of the Raviva program are interested in participating to a specific training day
- This training should include some theoretical content about Raviva, cancer and the link between cancer and PA as well as some practical sessions of adapted PA
- The in-service training day met the goals of the participants and the latter seemed willing to participate in future trainings
- Thus, these initiatives should be generalized or even imposed for all Raviva instructors
- This study should be conducted on a larger scale and include a larger number of Belgian instructors, or even be extended to other adapted physical activity organizations