



Get Strong to Fight Childhood Cancer

Delivering exercise in paediatric oncology: Perspectives from a researcher

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BACKGROUND

In recent years, there has been a considerable interest in the **benefits of exercise within paediatric oncology**. Childhood cancer patients show higher survival rates and better treatment outcomes than ever before. However, **patients and survivors are at risk of developing short- and long-term effects**, such as cardiovascular function impairments, chronic fatigue, and significant loss of physical fitness, **which could transfer to adulthood impacting their independence and overall quality of life**.

It is of **importance implementing effective interventions to enhance quality of life in this population**. Nevertheless, in the UK this beneficial pathway for cancer patients is still **less recognised and rarely implemented**.



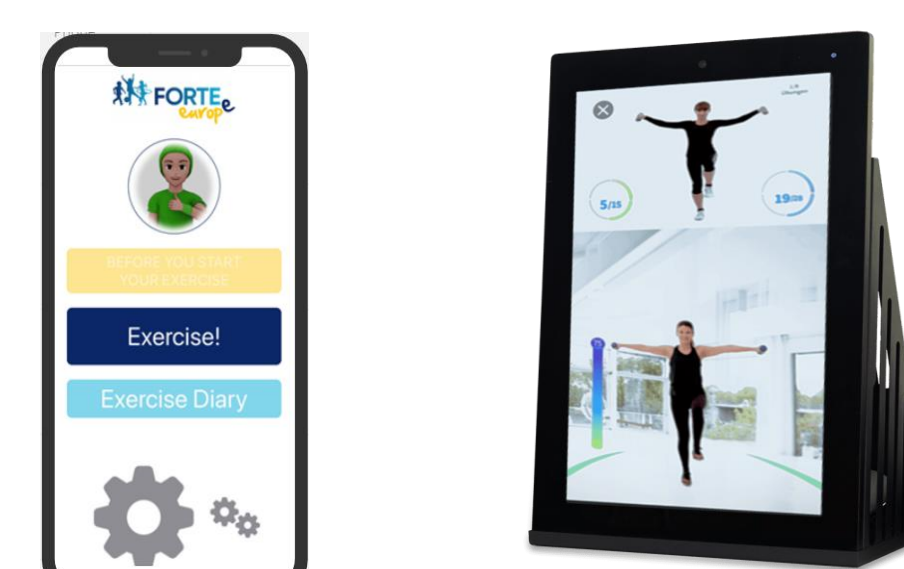
The **FORTEe project** is an exercise intervention for children and adolescents undergoing anti-cancer treatment currently being implemented in the UK. The purpose of this poster is **to share experiences regarding barriers and facilitators whilst implementing FORTEe**.

METHODS

FORTEe is a **randomised control trial involving 16 partner institutions**.



The trial aims to evaluate a **personalised 8 to 10-week exercise intervention** for children and young people. Supportive **digital technologies**.



RESULTS

The **principal outcome** assessed will be the **effect of physical activity on cancer related fatigue**. Additionally, physical performance, mental health, and HRQoL will also be assessed, as well as the feasibility and usability of the digital health technologies.

CONCLUSION

The **findings will contribute** to the **development** of evidence-based **guidelines** and **novel digital health technologies** to **support paediatric oncology** rehabilitation. Additionally, **FORTEe** seeks to create high-quality and stimulate translational evidence for the implementation of **exercise in paediatric oncology** as an evidence-based **standard in clinical care** for all cancer patients all over EU and beyond.

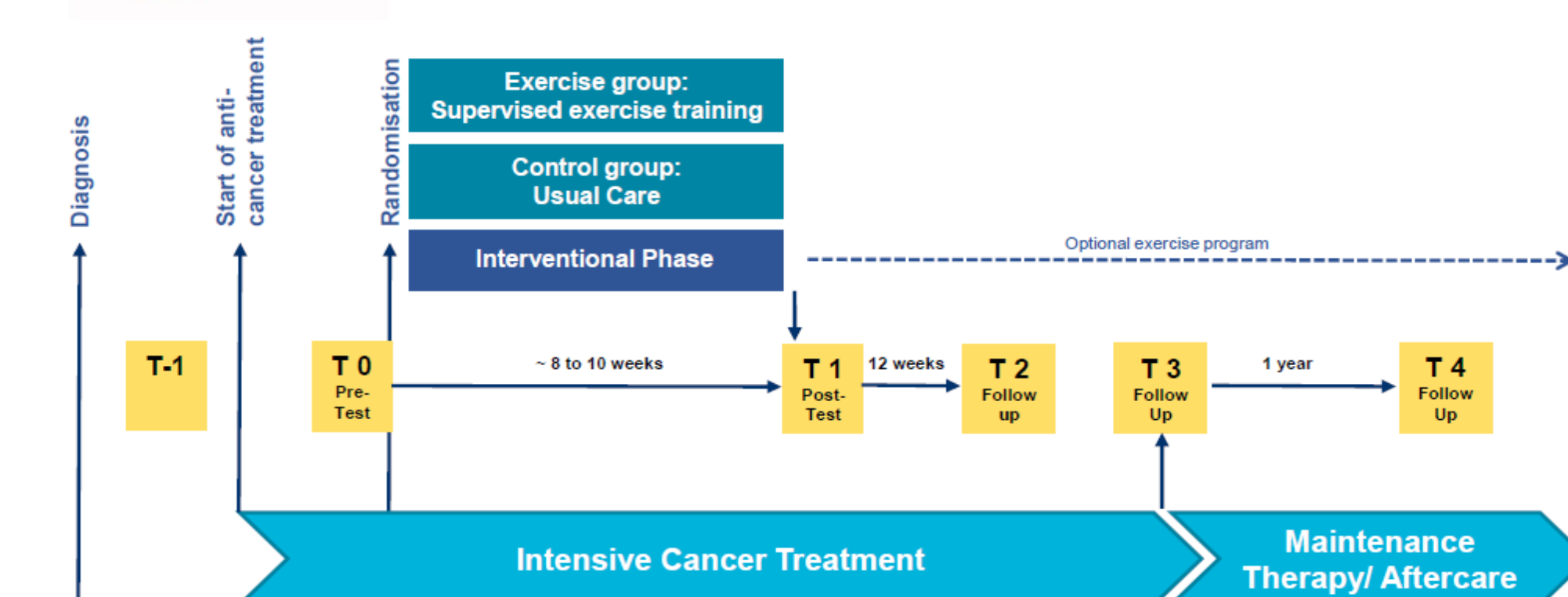
BARRIERS & FACILITATORS WHILST IMPLEMENTING FORTEe

- Overprotection
- Conservative beliefs on exercise (i.e., sick children need to rest)
- Lack of space to perform the sessions and to store the equipment
- Lack of scientific evidence in this field
- Supportive clinical team
- Embedding in the MDTs
- Access to the patient's information
- Access to day care and in-patient diaries

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS: PROVIDING EXERCISE IN THE WARD

1. Be in **constant communication** with the whole clinical team (i.e., consultants, doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, admin. Staff, etc.)
2. Before a session, **always check with the nurse and/or the doctor** how the patient is feeling (neutropenia, fatigue, sickness, pains, mood, etc.)
3. **Find out the preferences and interests of the children** re PA and sport
4. **Plan the sessions** according to the children's preferences as well as their needs (peripheral neuropathy, weaknesses, etc.)
6. **Always respect** the timings and desires of the patients

TIMEPOINTS AND DATA COLLECTION



Questionnaires, body composition, *physical fitness (endurance, strength, flexibility, balance)*, interviews (about the intervention and technology usage)

