

# Cross-Centre Analysis of Childhood Cancer Patients' Experiences within the FORTEe Exercise Trial: Insights from Denmark and Germany

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## KEY QUESTION

How do children with cancer and their families experience exercise therapy across different healthcare contexts?

## BACKGROUND

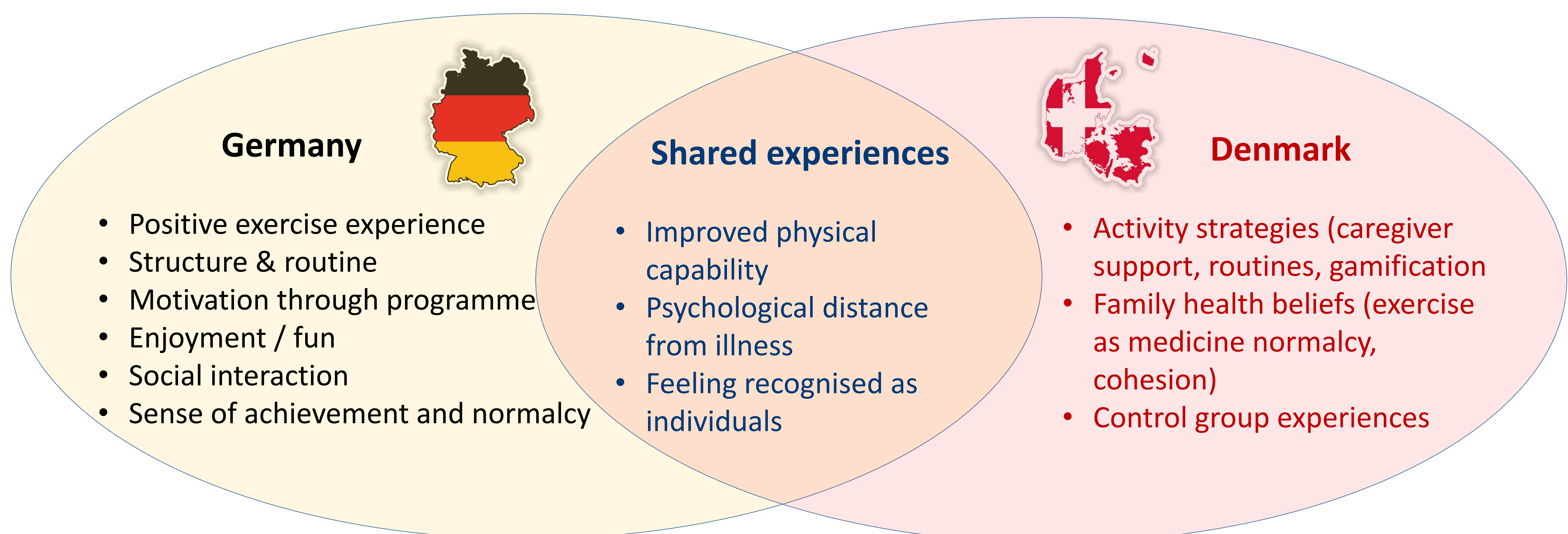
Exercise therapy is increasingly recognised as a supportive treatment in paediatric oncology, helping to mitigate loss of physical fitness and preserve quality of life. While single-centre studies show clear benefits of exercise interventions, little is known about how cultural and healthcare contexts shape families' experiences. This study compared patient and parent perspectives from the German and Danish sites of the FORTEe trial. Uniquely, the Danish cohort included both intervention and control group participants.

## METHODS

- Semi-structured interviews
- 23 interviews (patients & parents):
  - Mainz, Germany (6 patients, 3 parents; intervention only).
  - Copenhagen, Denmark (7 patients, 7 parents; intervention & control).
- Reflexive thematic analysis and the Framework Method to explore convergent and divergent themes across countries and treatment groups.

## RESULTS

- Exercise improved physical and psychological well-being across both sites.
- Families described increased autonomy, normalcy, and distance from illness.
- Danish data revealed additional themes:
  - 1) activity strategies
  - 2) family health beliefs
  - 3) diverse control group experiences



## CONCLUSION

- Exercise therapy is experienced as physically and psychologically meaningful across contexts.
- Family dynamics and healthcare settings shape how interventions are understood and used.
- Context-sensitive and equitable implementation is essential in paediatric oncology care.

