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Integrating Best Evidence into Practice: Outcomes of a Community-Based 12-week Exercise and Education Intervention in Women with Cancer

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PURPOSE

- Cancer treatment related fatigue is the most commonly reported side effect of cancer treatment.
- Exercise is an important component of managing cancer treatment related fatigue.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of a 12-week evidence-based exercise and education intervention on outcomes of fatigue, pain, depression, sleep disturbance and quality of life for women with cancer.

METHODS

- Women with any type of cancer were eligible to enroll regardless of whether or not they were on active cancer treatment. Women were not eligible to enroll if they had any contraindication to exercise.
- The team was led by a physical therapist and included medical and radiation oncologists, general surgeons, nurses and cancer survivors, who developed the structure, content and format of this 12-week community-based intervention.
- Supervised exercise sessions were held twice weekly and education sessions once per week in groups of 15.

Sample Schedule

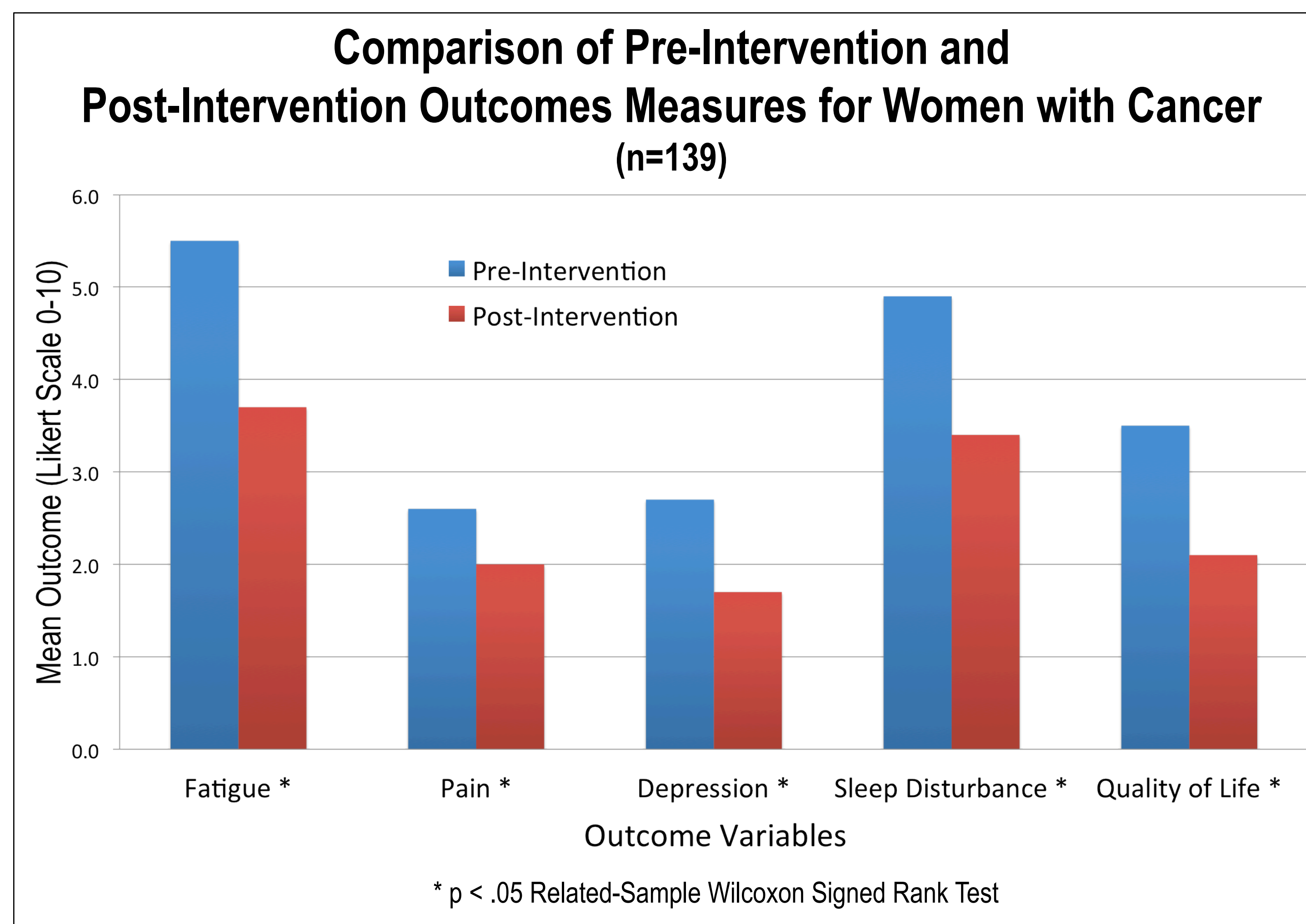
	EDUCATION TOPIC	EXERCISE
Week 1	Welcome, Exercise Information	stretch, aerobic exercise, strength with resistance bands
Week 2	Benefits of Exercise	stretch, aerobic exercise, strength with resistance bands
Week 3	Lymphedema	aerobic exercise followed by Yoga
Week 4	Nutrition	aquatic exercise in warm water therapy pool
Week 5	Menopause	stretch, aerobic exercise, strength with dumbbells
Week 6	Nutrition	stretch, aerobic exercise, strength with dumbbells
Week 7	Healing Arts	aerobic exercise followed by BODYFLOW™
Week 8	Communication and Coping	aerobic exercise followed by Pilates
Week 9	Stress Management	stretch, aerobic exercise, strength with resistance bands
Week 10	Spirituality	aquatic exercise in warm water therapy pool
Week 11	Sleep	stretch, aerobic exercise, strength with dumbbells
Week 12	Review of Exercise Plans	stretch, aerobic exercise, strength with resistance bands

- Participants reported their pre- and post-intervention perceptions of fatigue, pain, depression, sleep disturbance and quality of life on a 0 -10 point Likert scale (0 = none, 10 = worst).
- The intervention was offered at no cost to the participants in a community medically-based wellness center.



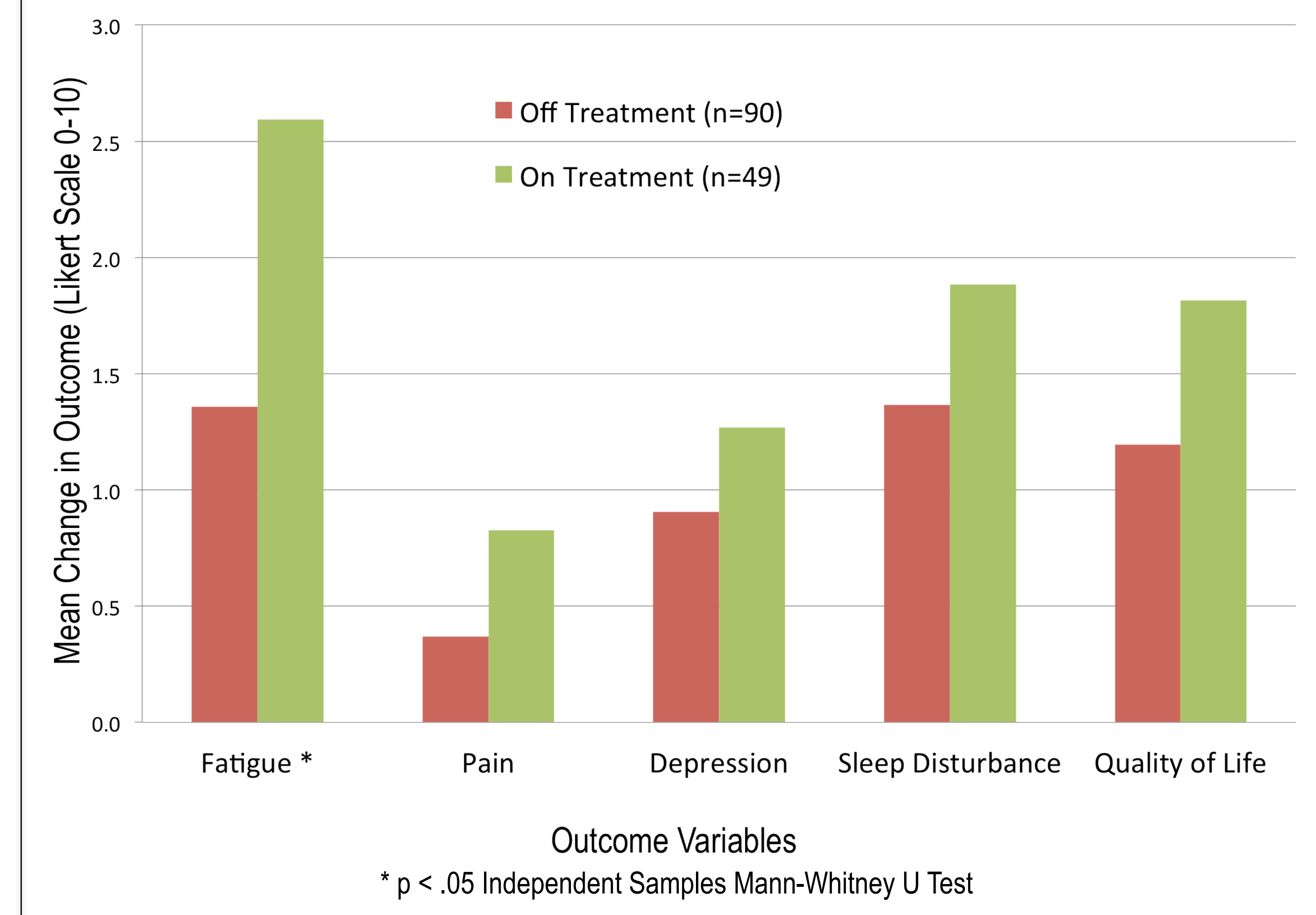
RESULTS

- We found significant decreases in the perceptions of self-reported fatigue, pain, depression, sleep disturbance, and quality of life.
- Approximately 80% completed the intervention.



- A subgroup analysis revealed that the impact of the intervention varied according to treatment status. Specifically, perceptions of fatigue decreased significantly for women on treatment as compared to women who had completed treatment.
- Women on active treatment reported significantly higher levels of fatigue at the start of the intervention than did the women who had completed treatment (6.4 vs. 5.0, p < .00001).

Effects of Exercise and Education Intervention in Women with Cancer: On/Off Active Treatment



CONCLUSION

- Our findings indicate that implementation of an evidence-based exercise and education intervention in a medically-based wellness center is effective in improving self-reported outcomes (fatigue, pain, depression, sleep disturbance, and quality of life) for women with cancer.
- The most significant impact of the intervention appeared to be in decreasing fatigue for women on active cancer treatment.

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