Research & Evidence Base

Demonstrating the transformative impact of community-based cancer support through rigorous research and data-driven insights

Our Commitment to Evidence-Based Support

At Cancer United, we believe in the power of evidence to drive better outcomes for people living with and beyond cancer. Our approach is grounded in both our own impact assessments and established academic research demonstrating the vital role of exercise, peer support, and holistic care in cancer recovery.

This page showcases the research foundation that informs our work and validates our mission to transform lives through comprehensive, community-based cancer support.

Impact at a Glance

96%
Improved fitness and wellbeing

84%
Rate services as 'excellent'

71%
Feel more hopeful and positive

85%
Value community connections

Cancer United Impact Assessment 2025

Exercise and Quality of Life in Cancer Survivors

Dr Gesine Hermann, Jan Sheward BEM, Erica Sheward FHEA FIFST FRSPH | Published: May 2025

Our comprehensive member survey reveals the transformational impact of Cancer United's services on emotional, physical, and social wellbeing for people living with and beyond cancer.

Key Findings:

- **Emotional uplift:** 71% became more hopeful and positive; 69% felt better supported
- **Physical benefits:** 96% of CUFITTER users reported improved fitness
- **Social connection:** 85% valued friendships; 76% found peer-sharing beneficial
- **Overall excellence:** 84% rated services as 'excellent'; zero poor ratings

Buffart LM et al. | Sports Medicine (2018) | Systematic Review

This landmark systematic review examined the effects of physical activity and exercise on health-related quality of life in cancer survivors, analyzing 95 randomized controlled trials.

Key Findings:

- Exercise significantly improves quality of life across multiple cancer types
- Benefits include reduced fatigue, improved physical function, and enhanced emotional wellbeing
- Cancer-specific exercise programs show superior outcomes compared to general exercise
- Both during and after treatment, exercise demonstrates consistent positive effects

Evidence-Based Impact Across Four Pillars

Physical Health

Our cancer-specific exercise programs demonstrate measurable improvements in fitness, strength, and functional capacity, validated by both member outcomes and academic research.

Emotional Wellbeing

Members report significant improvements in hope, positivity, and stress management – critical factors in cancer recovery supported by research evidence.

Social Connection

Peer support and community building reduce isolation and improve outcomes, with 85% of members valuing the friendships formed through our services.

Holistic Support

Our comprehensive approach addresses gaps in the healthcare pathway, particularly around rehabilitation and primary care involvement.

Bridging the Evidence Gap

Our impact assessment reveals critical gaps in cancer care provision:

- Only **15% were aware of or offered pre-habilitation** before treatment
- Just **27% accessed rehabilitation** services after treatment
- Only **41% reported meaningful GP involvement** in their cancer journey
- **No formal GP referral pathways** exist to community cancer support services

These findings highlight urgent opportunities for system improvement and demonstrate why organizations like Cancer United are essential to comprehensive cancer care.

Our Research Commitment

Cancer United is committed to annual member surveys, building a longitudinal evidence base and exploring focused research projects on peer support, exercise interventions, and emotional resilience.