Introduction

Adolescent cancer survivors experience several negative short- and long-term side effects and health outcomes as a result of their past therapy:
- Comorbidities, chronic conditions, premature mortality, and physical limitations
- Psychological, emotional, and social impairments
- Reduced quality of life
- Recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses show that physical activity can help mitigate these negative side effects and health outcomes in children and adults with cancer
- Less information exists for adolescent cancer populations
- The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology recommends 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily for youth
- Less than 30% of cancer survivors 9-18 years of age are meeting these guidelines
- The determinants of physical activity in this population need to be better understood to highlight what factors to target in behavioural interventions

Parent as agent of influence
- Parents considerably impact their child's physical activity behaviour
  - Can positively influence behaviour by providing different types of support, namely:
    - Instrumental (e.g., paying fees)
    - Conditional (e.g., engaging in activity)
    - Motivational (e.g., encouragement)
    - Informational (e.g., discussing benefits)
  - Can negatively influence and undermine behaviour by exerting control
- While developmental theories suggest parents influence diminishes from early childhood onwards, this may not be the case for adolescent cancer survivors
- Adolescents experience increased dependence on their parents during treatment and into survivorship
- Isolation from peers during treatment puts emphasis on parents as a main source of support

Knowledge Gaps
- The mechanisms by which parents exert influence over their adolescents’ physical activity behaviour are unknown
- Investigation of parental support and control within single studies are lacking
- Research including parents and adolescents’ perspectives is necessary to investigate the distinct perceptions of support/control they are experiencing, as well as determine if there are discrepancies

Purpose
- Explore how parents support and/or undermine their adolescents’ physical activity behaviour after the latter have completed treatment for cancer

Methods

Recruitment
- 10-15 adolescent-parent dyads will be recruited using promotional material through:
  - Community programs
  - Youth oncology foundations and associations
  - Youth oncology camps
  - Adolescent oncology websites

Participants
- Adolescent inclusion criteria:
  - 15-19 years old
  - Completed treatment for cancer (< 5 years)
- Parent inclusion criteria:
  - Parent to an adolescent meeting the above inclusion criteria

Data Collection
- Parent-reported
  - Sociodemographic and cancer questionnaire
  - Parent- and adolescent-reported
  - Godin Leisure Time Exercise Questionnaire
  - 2 interviews audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim
  - Performed individually
    - Interview # 1:
      - To gather information concerning perceptions of parental support/control for physical activity
      - 45-minutes in person or on the phone
      - Semi-structured interview
      - Interview # 2:
        - To verify the accuracy of participants’ transcripts
        - 15-minutes on the phone

Data Analysis
- Thematic analysis following the flexible guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke
  1. Become familiar with the data
  2. Identify salient features
  3. Group similar codes together into subthemes and organize into main themes
  4. Perform member checks
    - Internal homogeneity
    - External heterogeneity
  5. Generate descriptions for each theme
  6. Select representative quotes

Anticipated Contributions
- This study will be the first to examine adolescent cancer survivors perceptions of parental support and control for physical activity using a dyadic approach
- Upon completion this study has the potential to:
  - Support or rebuff prevailing socioecological physical activity theories
  - Gain insight into how parents’ influence their offspring’s physical activity behaviour in the aftermath of cancer
  - Increase awareness of how parents come to support or hinder their adolescents’ physical activity behaviour
- If it is determined that parents exert considerable influence over their adolescent’s behaviours, then it may help understand, in part, why adolescent cancer survivors are not meeting physical activity guidelines
- These findings may directly impact intervention strategies focused on enhancing physical activity levels by determining if parental support/control should be targeted in behavioural interventions

Future Directions
- In an effort to expand research to improve participation rates, and ultimately improve quality of life, it is hoped this study will inform larger scale qualitative and quantitative studies exploring:
  - Associations between support and physical activity
  - Mechanisms by which parents may exert support and control
  - Mediators and moderators that may influence the association between support/control and physical activity behaviours
  - Parental support in relation to other sources of support
  - Unique influence of different types of support and controlling behaviours on adolescents physical activity behaviour

References