Correlation between Lactate Accumulation and Subjective Measures of Fatigue in Active Cancer Patients

Katie Kurz, Nicholas Harman, Arjun Ramani, Reid Hayward

School of Sport and Exercise Science and the University of Northern Colorado Cancer Rehabilitation Institute
University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
Cancer Rehabilitation Institute

ABSTRACT

Purpose: To understand the relationship between lactate accumulation in the blood during exercise and subjective measures of fatigue in cancer patients after a 12-week exercise intervention. **Hypothesis:** Exercise training will delay the onset of blood lactate accumulation (OBLA) during progressive exercise and this will be associated with a decrease in subjective perceptions of fatigue at rest. **Methods:** Participants were recruited upon referral by a physician to the UNCCRI Phase Program. Each participant performed an exercise-based assessment upon entry which included measures of fatigue and cardiorespiratory fitness (CRF). CRF was assessed using the UNCCRI treadmill protocol and blood lactate measurements were obtained every 2 minutes during this progressive exercise test. After the 12-week exercise intervention, all measures were repeated. Markers of performance such as the OBLA and the metabolic equivalent (MET) at OBLA were used in a correlation analysis with Piper Fatigue Scale scores. **Results:** After 12 weeks of exercise, participants showed a significant decrease in total fatigue (pre: 4.09 ± 1.78, post: 3.12 ±1.93, p < 0.01), behavioral fatigue (pre: 3.83 ± 2.46, post: 2.39 ± 2.22, p < 0.01), affective fatigue (pre: 4.25 ± 2.32, post: 3.43 ± 2.26, p < 0.05), sensory fatigue (pre: 4.71 ± 1.86, post: 3.49 ± 2.01, p < 0.001), and cognitive fatigue (pre: 3.88 ± 1.76, post: 3.17 ± 1.82, p < 0.05). After the intervention, participants showed a significant increase in MET at OBLA (pre: 5.76 ± 1.73, post: 6.91 ± 1.83, p < 0.001), time to termination of the treadmill protocol (pre: 8.76 ± 3.09, post: 9.92 ± 3.07 minutes, p < 0.001), MET at completion (pre: 5.9 ± 2.04, post: 6.78 ± 2.2, p < 0.001), and lactate concentration at the time of termination (pre: 5.65 ± 2.28, post: 6.63 ± 3.07 mmol, p < 0.05). Correlating MET at OBLA at the initial assessment with initial measures of fatigue showed a weak, negative correlation with all fatigue measures (total fatigue: r = - 0.21, behavioral fatigue: r = - 0.17, affective fatigue: r = - 0.25, sensory fatigue: r = - 0.16, cognitive fatigue: r = - 0.08). After 12 weeks of exercise, correlating MET at OBLA with follow-up fatigue measures showed improved correlation to all measure of fatigue except affective fatigue (total fatigue: r = - 0.22, behavioral fatigue: r = - 0.25, affective fatigue: r = - 0.17, sensory fatigue: r = - 0.18, cognitive fatigue: r = - 0.10). None of the correlation coefficients were statistically significant. **Conclusion:** These data indicate a weak relationship between OBLA and perception of fatigue. The lack of a significant correlation for any measure of fatigue and OBLA does not support the initial hypothesis. In turn, these data provide no strong evidence for a relationship between exercise OBLA and perception of fatigue at rest in a population of cancer patients after 12 weeks of exercise training.

METHODS

Participants were recruited upon referral by a physician to the UNCCRI Phase Program. Each participant performed an exercise-based assessment upon entry which included measures of fatigue and CRF. CRF was assessed using the UNCCRI treadmill protocol and blood lactate measurements were obtained every 2 minutes during this progressive exercise test. After the 12-week exercise intervention, all measures were repeated. Markers of performance such as the OBLA and the MET at OBLA were used in a correlation analysis with Piper Fatigue Scale scores.

RESULTS

After 12 weeks of exercise, participants showed a significant decrease in total fatigue (pre: 4.09 ± 1.78, post: 3.12 ±1.9, p < 0.01), behavioral fatigue (pre: 3.83 ± 2.46, post: 2.39 ± 2.22, p < 0.01), affective fatigue (pre: 4.25 ± 2.32, post: 3.43 ± 2.26, p < 0.05), sensory fatigue (pre: 4.7 ± 1.86, post: 3.49 ± 2.01, p < 0.001), and cognitive fatigue (pre: 3.88 ± 1.76, post: 3.17 ± 1.82, p < 0.05). After the intervention, participants showed a significant increase in MET at OBLA (pre: 5.76 ± 1.73, post: 6.91 ± 1.83, p < 0.001), time to termination of the treadmill protocol (pre: 8.76 ± 3.09, post: 9.92 ± 3.07 minutes, p < 0.001), MET at completion (pre: 5.9 ± 2.04, post: 6.78 ± 2.2, p < 0.001), and lactate concentration at the time of termination (pre: 5.65 ± 2.28, post: 6.63 ± 3.07 mmol, p < 0.05). Correlating MET at OBLA at the initial assessment with initial measures of fatigue showed a weak, negative correlation with all fatigue measures (total fatigue: r = - 0.21, behavioral fatigue: r = - 0.17, affective fatigue: r = - 0.25, sensory fatigue: r = - 0.16, cognitive fatigue: r = - 0.08). After 12 weeks of exercise, correlating MET at OBLA with follow-up fatigue measures showed improved correlation to all measure of fatigue except affective fatigue (total fatigue: r = - 0.22, behavioral fatigue: r = - 0.25, affective fatigue: r = - 0.17, sensory fatigue: r = - 0.18, cognitive fatigue: r = - 0.10). None of the correlation coefficients were statistically significant.

Table 1 Initial and Post Fatigue and Correlation with MET at OBLA

	Initial (n = 43)	Post (n = 43)	Initial Pearson Correlation	Post Pearson Correlation
Total	4.09 ± 1.78	3.12 ± 1.93*	- 0.21	- 0.22
Behavioral	3.38 ± 2.46	2.39 ± 2.22*	- 0.17	- 0.25
Affective	4.25 ± 2.32	3.43 ± 2.26*	- 0.25	- 0.17
Sensory	4.71 ± 1.83	3.49 ± 2.01*	- 0.16	- 0.18
Cognitive	3.88 ± 1.76	3.17 ± 1.82*	- 0.08	- 0.10

Values represent sample mean (± standard deviation) of the given population. * Denotes significance from initial to post-intervention values within the subject population at alpha = 0.05 (p < 0.05).

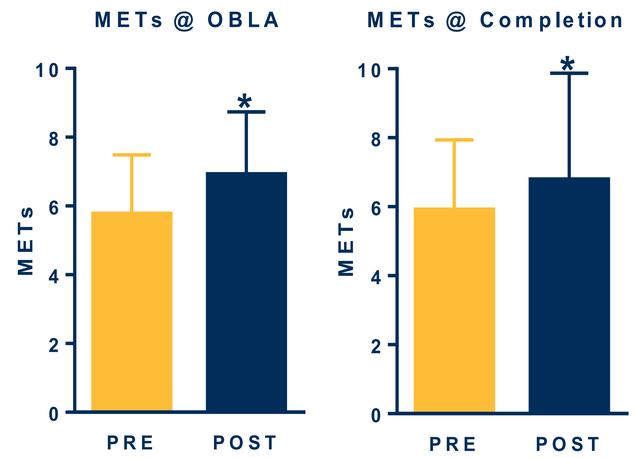


*Figure 1 METS at OBLA and METs at Completion. *Denotes significance from pre to post-intervention values within the subject population at alpha = 0.05 (p < 0.05).*

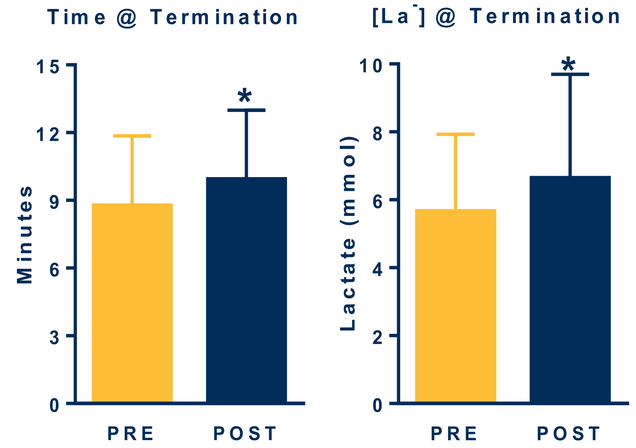
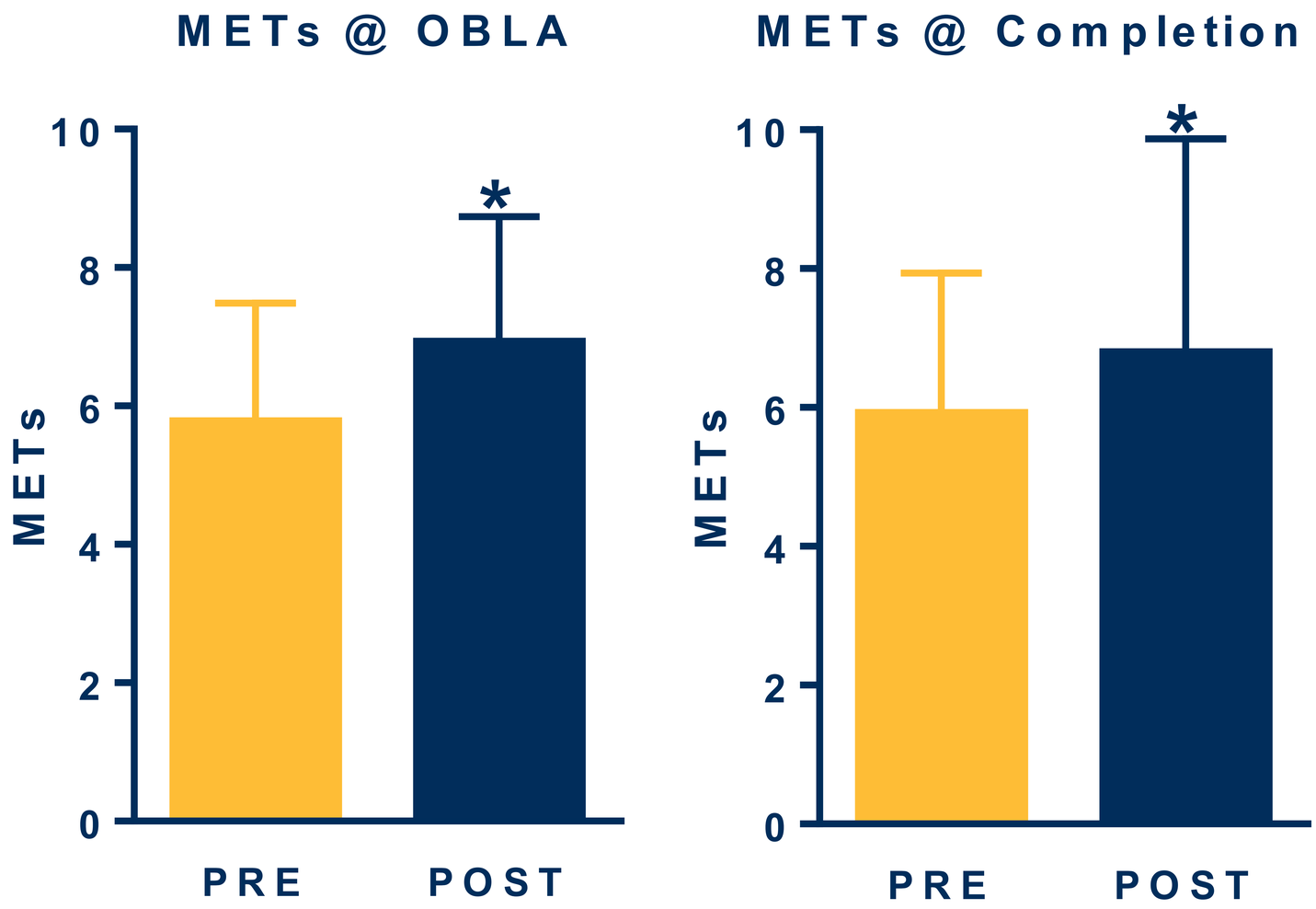
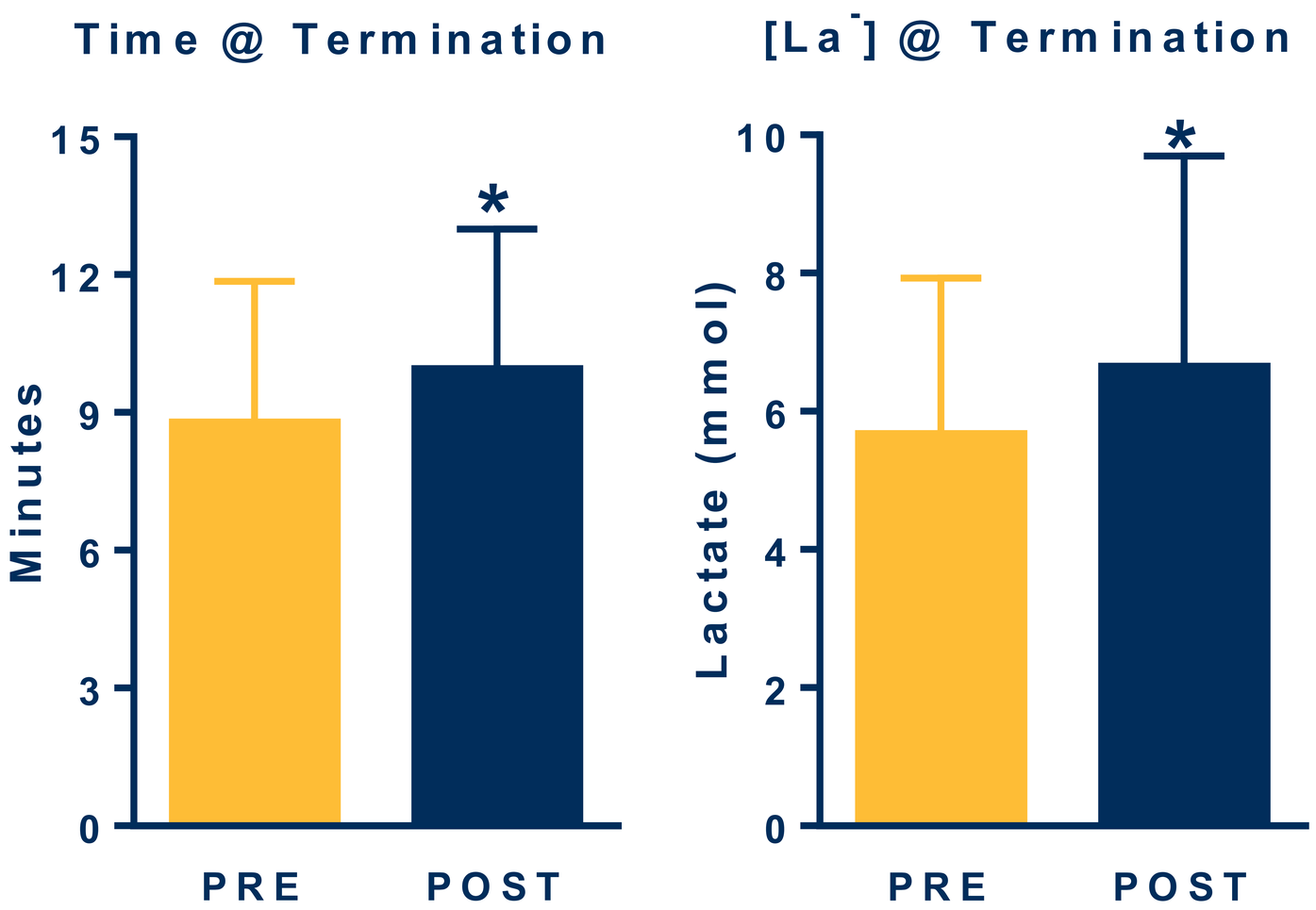


Figure 2 Time at Termination and Lactate at Time of Termination. Denotes significance from pre to post-intervention values within the subject population at alpha = 0.05 (p < 0.05).

CONCLUSIONS

- These data indicate a weak relationship between OBLA and perception of fatigue.
- These data provide no strong evidence for a relationship between exercise OBLA and perception of fatigue at rest in a population of cancer patients after 12 weeks of exercise training.


METs @ OBLA
METs @ Completion
METs
10
8
6
4
2
0
*
*
PRE
POST
PRE
POST


Time @ Termination
Minutes
15
12
9
6
3
0
*
PRE
POST
[La-] @ Termination
Lactate (mmol)
10
8
6
4
2
0
*
PRE
POST