Background
Prostate cancer has become the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia, accounting for 31% of male cancers and 17% of all cancers. Treatment options for men diagnosed with prostate cancer depend on the size and location of the tumour, whether the cancer has spread beyond the prostate, the man’s age and overall health status. Treatments commonly include surgery, radiotherapy, hormone therapy, chemotherapy, or combinations of these treatments. There are many symptoms and side effects to cancer and cancer treatments. Due to advances in the management of disabling side effects such as nausea and vomiting, fatigue has emerged as the most common and most distressing complaint reported by cancer patients. While fatigue is a well-recognised concept by the general population, cancer-related fatigue (CRF) is not proportional to recent activity, is unrelieved by rest or sleep and can last months or even years after completion of cancer treatment. For prostate cancer, it is the most frequently reported long term side effect of radiotherapy. CRF is a subjective experience which affects the whole person – physically, mentally and emotionally. If CRF could be alleviated or minimised, it follows that a man treated for prostate cancer should therefore be able to enjoy a better quality of life. It is only in recent years that knowledge about CRF has increased and received wider attention in the literature and in intervention trials, although most of these relate to women with breast cancer.

To date there has not been a systematic review of interventions for cancer-related fatigue in men with prostate cancer, during and following treatment. The objective of this systematic review is to synthesise the best available evidence of the effectiveness of non-pharmacological interventions for managing cancer-related fatigue in men with prostate cancer who are undergoing or have completed treatment within the previous 12 months.

Methods
Objective
The objective of this systematic review is to synthesise the best available evidence of the effectiveness of non-pharmacological interventions for managing cancer-related fatigue in men with prostate cancer who are undergoing or have completed treatment within the previous 12 months.

Types of participants
This systematic review will consider studies that include men with prostate cancer, regardless of stage of disease, previous treatment or comorbidities, aged 18 years and over, who are undergoing any treatment, or have completed any treatment for prostate cancer, within the previous 12 months.

Types of interventions
This review will consider studies that evaluate non-pharmacological interventions, including (but not limited to): exercise, energy conservation, diet modification, counseling, education, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and meditation, using other non-pharmacological interventions or standard care as comparators.

Types of outcomes
Outcomes to be considered for this review include the following measures: fatigue and Quality of Life. Only outcomes measured using existing, validated tools will be considered.

Types of studies
Primarily, randomised controlled trials will be considered for inclusion in this review. For identified interventions where there are no randomised controlled trials located then other prospective study designs including non-randomised controlled trials, quasi-experimental and cohort studies will be considered.

Search strategy
The search strategy aims to find both published and unpublished studies. A three-step search strategy will be utilised in this review. An initial limited search of MEDLINE and CINAHL will be undertaken followed by analysis of the keywords contained in the title and abstract, and of the index terms used to describe the article. A second search using all identified keywords and index terms will then be undertaken across all included databases. Thirdly, the reference list of all identified reports and articles will be searched for additional studies. Studies published in English between 1990 and 2011 will be considered for inclusion in this review. A start date at 1990 is being used as the first randomised controlled trial of interventions for cancer related fatigue was published in 1992.

The databases to be searched include: MEDLINE, CINAHL, ProQuest, PsychINFO, Cochrane Library, Embase and Web of Science. The search for unpublished studies will include: MedNar, ProQuest, PsychExtra, SIGLE, Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry, ClinicalTrials.gov, World Health Organisation International Clinical Trials Registry Platform, EU Clinical Trials Register and Cochrane Trials Register.

Initial keywords to be used will be: prostate cancer, prostate carcinoma, prostate neoplasms, interventions, non-pharmacological exercise, energy conservation, education, diet modification, counseling, cognitive behavioural therapy, meditation, therapy, fatigue, cancer fatigue and cancer related fatigue.

Project so far
This systematic review is being conducted in partial fulfillment for the award of Master of Clinical Science. The protocol has undergone peer review and panel presentation. Preliminary literature searching has been undertaken and the second literature search is currently underway.

References