

Baring all: The impact of the hospital gown on recovery & wellbeing for adults living with a heart condition from birth.

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Background: Despite recent drives to empower patients with person centred health care provisions, the institutionalised acceptance of the hospital gown persists. Research has yet to explore the impact of wearing the hospital gown on patients' health, wellbeing and recovery.

Methods: Two small scale studies were carried out to consider the impact of the hospital gown on wellbeing and recovery among adults with and without chronic health conditions. The first study consisted of conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews (n = 10) with adults living with life-long chronic health conditions, which were audio-recorded, transcribed and thematic analysis was used to identify themes from the qualitative data. The second study was a cross-sectional, online survey exploring adults' views (n = 200+) and experiences of the hospital gown.

Expected results: Qualitative analysis identified the following master themes: (1) loss of 'healthy' identity, (2) symbolic embodiment of the 'sick' role, (3) relinquishing control to medical professionals, and (4) vulnerability, disempowerment and embarrassment. Quantitative analysis of the online survey data indicated that adults often reported wearing the hospital gown despite lack of medical necessity. Its design was considered to be not fit for purpose and lacking in dignity.

Current stage of work: Completed qualitative data collection and preliminary analysis of data. Data collection for online survey is ongoing.

Discussion: The implications of these findings are discussed, emphasising the importance of challenging cultural norms in healthcare since de-humanising aspects of care may contribute adversely impact wellbeing and recovery.

Keywords: hospital gown; health care; patient wellbeing; patient recovery

Accepted manuscript of the following research output: Morton, L., Cogan, N., & Emmanouil (Manos), G. (Accepted/In press). *Baring all: The impact of the hospital gown on recovery & wellbeing for adults living with a heart condition from birth..* Abstract from 33rd Annual Conference of the European Health Psychology Society, Dubrovnik, Croatia.