

RECOVERY FOLLOWING PNEUMONECTOMY:
PATIENTS INITIAL 2 YEAR EXPERIENCE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT

KEY TO THE TEXT

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background to the study	1
1.2	Purpose of the study	3
1.3	Organisation of the thesis	4
1.4	Background Information	5
1.4.1	Lung cancer	6
1.4.2	Smoking	8
1.4.3	Historical background: lung surgery, smoking and pneumonectomy	10

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	15
2.2	Treatment	15
2.3	Recovery	18
2.4	Literature searches and review	21
2.5	Personal experiences of surgery and recovering after pneumonectomy	22
2.6	Nursing publications related to surgery and recovery after pneumonectomy	25
2.7	Medical literature related to surgery and recovery after pneumonectomy	27
2.8	Other literature related to lung cancer surgery and recovery	27
2.9	Conclusion	27

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	29
3.2	Philosophical Underpinning	29
3.2.1	Phenomenology	31
3.2.2	Obtaining information rich data	36
3.3	How the study was conducted: the methodology	37
3.4	Data analysis	41
3.5	Rigor and validation	43
3.6	Ethical considerations	45
3.7	Methodological issues	46
3.8	Conclusion	47

CHAPTER 4 SECTION 1 LIVING THE DISCOMFORTS OF TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

4.1.1	Introduction	49
4.1.2	Discomfort	50
4.1.3	Post-operative pain	56
	4.1.3.1 Pain Management and patient experiences of pain	58
	4.1.3.2 Acute pericarditis	66
	4.1.3.3 Fear of drug addiction, physical dependence, and tolerance	66
	4.1.3.4 Other pain experiences	69
4.1.4	Fluid in the pneumonectomy space	71
4.1.5	Epigastric symptoms	74
4.1.6	Constipation	75
4.1.7	Hospital experience	75
4.1.8	Concluding comment	77

CHAPTER 4 SECTION 2 DISCOVERING NEW LIMITATIONS ON MY SELF: FUNCTIONAL AND EMOTIONAL

4.2.1	Introduction	79
4.2.2	Limitations	80
4.2.3	Participant experiences	81
	4.2.3.1 Shortness of breath	81
	4.2.3.2 Lifting	82
	4.2.3.3 Social, leisure, and pleasure activities	83
	4.2.3.4 Activities of daily living	84
	4.2.3.5 Sport and fitness	86
4.2.4	Emotional impact of physical limitations	88
4.2.5	Disability	88
4.2.6	Sexuality	92
4.2.7	Quality of life	95
4.2.8	The overall impact of limitations on recovery	98
4.2.9	Conclusion	99

CHAPTER 4 SECTION 3 MY RELIANCE ON SUPPORT

4.3.1	Introduction	100
4.3.2	Coping, suffering, and enduring	100
4.3.3	Family and friends support	101
4.3.4	Professional support	108
4.3.5	Nursing support	114
4.3.6	Support groups	115
4.3.7	Conclusion	117

CHAPTER 4 SECTION 4 MY FINANCIAL SECURITY IS THREATENED

4.4.1	Introduction	119
4.4.2	Experiences of returning to work	119
	Category 1: Light work	121
	Category 2: Heavy physical work with an option to alter work practices	122
	Category 3: Heavy demanding work, no option to return to the same work	124
4.4.3	Return to work and power	129
4.4.4	Conclusion	131

CHAPTER 4 SECTION 5 MY SURVIVAL IS AT THREAT

4.5.1	Introduction	133
4.5.2	Surviving cancer: surviving lung cancer	133
4.5.3	Participants' experiences	135
4.5.4	Literature about surviving lung cancer	143
4.5.5	Conclusion	147

CHAPTER 4 SECTION 6 I WISH I HAD KNOWN MORE

4.6.1	Introduction	148
4.6.2	Information	149
4.6.3	Information and decision making	151
4.6.4	Information making sense	153
4.6.5	Conclusion	157

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Summary of the study	159
5.2	Summary of the findings	160
5.3	Limitations of the study	162
5.4	Implications for patient care	163
5.5	Implications for clinical practice: in nursing and other fields	163
5.6	Implications for patient and nursing education	164
5.7	Implications for research: in nursing and other fields	165
5.8	Conclusion	165

REFERENCES

167 - 174

APPENDIXES

- Appendix A Information for Participants
- Appendix B Interview questions
- Appendix C Participant consent form
- Appendix D Letter to local Medical Officer
- Appendix E Letter of introduction to potential participants
- Appendix F The revised American Joint Committee for Cancer Staging
- Appendix G Letter to participants re themes and content

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I discovered while conducting this research that research involves not only entering the lives of the people you are studying, but also entering your own life in terms of the discipline and focus that one needs in order to complete this type of work. I found this study to be an arduous yet inspiring task and it involved the lives of many people that I wish to recognise.

This study could not have been completed without the valuable assistance from my Supervisor, Dr. Jennifer Blundell. Jenni quietly guided me in the right direction when I needed it, and she provided me with timely encouragement and support.

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I dedicate this study to my late mum and dad who had the insight to send me nursing so that I could help other people, and to my late friends Chris and Judy who died of lung cancer while the study was being conducted.

While I was struggling with the study, I came across this quote in a research text. It gave me much solace: *Do not be afraid to seize whatever you have written and cut it to ribbons; it can always be restored to its original condition in the morning, if that...seems the best. Remember, it is no sign of weakness or defeat that your manuscript ends up in need of major surgery. This is a common occurrence in all writing, and among the best writers (Strunk and White 1972, 72 cited in Dane, 1990, 211).*

ABSTRACT

RECOVERY FOLLOWING PNEUMONECTOMY: PATIENTS INITIAL 2-YEAR EXPERIENCE.

Little is known about the recovery of patients after pneumonectomy and the impact of the surgery on the lifestyle of young, employed, ex-smokers and their families. This study was conducted to address this knowledge deficit, and gather information that would help health professionals to be able to assist people facing pneumonectomy. A qualitative study using van Manens methodological approach to interpretive phenomenology was chosen, in order to capture a full and rich understanding and meaning of the phenomenon that patients live.

The names, age, operation, histological cell type, stage of disease, and disease free status of potential participants were obtained from a Lung Cancer Surgical Database after obtaining ethical approval for the study. Nine participants (three females and six males) met the inclusion criteria and gave informed consent for the study. Data collection comprised of open-ended interviews that were audiotaped, then transcribed verbatim into hard data. Data interpretation was based on the selective reading approach of van Manen from which six thematic statements arose. These are living the discomforts of treatment and recovery, discovering new limitations on myself; functional and emotional, my reliance on support, my financial security is threatened, my survival is at threat, and I wish I had known more.

The study found that each participant had a unique experience of recovery and consequently the degree of recovery attained varied between participants. They all had a very strong desire to survive lung cancer and considered the risks of major surgery and losing a lung to be insignificant compared to the certainty of losing their life if they did not undergo surgery. This study provided a glimpse of what it was like for a group of patients to live the experience of life after a pneumonectomy and it provides a basis from which nurses can explore further the experiences of patients who are subjected to lung cancer surgery.

KEY TO THE TEXT

An essential component of this study was the information contained in the transcripts of the interviews that participants gave. Sections of these transcripts have been quoted in this thesis to enrich the meaning of the themes.

Some editing of the spoken word has been necessary so that the written word would be more comprehensible. Some words have been left out, while others have been inserted, but the original meaning of the dialogue has been retained.

Alterations within the text have been symbolised as follows:

... An ellipse indicates that text has been deleted by the researcher to edit out irrelevant material.

[words within quotes] Square brackets around normal text indicate words that have been inserted to so that the reader can appreciate the body language/mood of the participant during that section of the interview.

[*words within quotes*] Square brackets around italicised text indicate words that the researcher inserted to assist the reader to comprehend the interview dialogue.

Italics Italics indicate that a direct quote from the transcript has been used.

‘Single spaced
normal text’ Singled spaced, normal text within single quotation marks indicate a direct quote from the literature.