

00217 Patients' Perceptions of Their Life Situation After a First Time Stroke: A Qualitative Descriptive Study

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Aims: This study was aimed to explore stroke survivors' perceptions of their life situation after first time stroke based on a holistic existential perspective following an acute stroke event.

Methodology: A qualitative descriptive study design was applied. A semi-structured interview guide was designed incorporating the discussion of the four existential dimensions of life, i.e. physical, social, personal and spiritual. This approach was adopted to provide a holistic view of each individual as an integrated whole being, situated always in context and in relation to the surrounding milieu. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using the interview guide with first-time stroke survivors, who were aged 50 years old and above, admitted in a rehabilitation unit. The interviews were audiotaped, transcribed and analysed using a content analysis approach. Two researchers reflected independently on the data and thereafter discussed together own individual list of themes until arriving at concurrence on the interpretation of the data.

Result: Nine stroke survivors (four females, five males) were recruited, aged ranging from 55 to 80 years old. Functional Independence Measure (FIM) scale score was 76 – 100 indicating these participants requiring generally minimal to contact assistance. Five themes emerged from analysis, each with several subthemes. The first two themes, "Loss and disruption to life", and "Emotional aftermath", represented the participants' perceptions upon the realization and initial experience of stroke. Subsequently as they underwent further along the stroke trajectory, three other themes were identified: "Heightened awareness to own body and health", "Coming to terms through internal and external support" and "Reshaping of own life plan".

Conclusion: The study revealed a holistic picture of how the stroke survivors interpreted, perceived, and reinterpreted their life situation as they progressed through immediate

period following stroke to rehabilitation stage. As healthcare professionals who play a crucial role of supporting patients through this sudden disruptive event, it is pivotal to better understand the complexities of patients' perception and experience from their own perspective.