RECOVERY FOLLOWING PNEUMONECTOMY: 
PATIENTS INITIAL 2 YEAR EXPERIENCE

JOCEYLN MCLEAN

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

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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 Manen's 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.