

EARLY RECOVERY EXPERIENCES OF PATIENTS AFTER AN UNEXPECTED CARDIAC SURGERY: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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Aim: The aim of this study was to understand the early stage of illness recovery experiences and related needs of patients who underwent emergency cardiac surgery.

Methods: A qualitative approach was used. Patients who had been transferred from intensive care units to a general ward for least 6 days and were expecting to be discharged within one week were interviewed at a medical center in northern Taiwan.

Results: A total of 9 patients participated in this study. Two themes emerged from the analysis related to their illness experiences. Patients felt 'shock' when they were informed to have emergency surgery or when they woke up to know surgery had been done on them, including unbelieving and suspicious. They also described various degree of 'psychiatric symptoms', such as fragment of memory or memory loss related to the medical procedure, nightmares, insomnia, hallucinations, derealization, daze, sluggish response, and attention deficit. Three themes emerged from the analysis looking at their needs. Patients described the needs for 'reassurances,' 'support,' and 'more information about subsequent treatment and care' to rebuild their new life in the future.

Conclusion: This study has shown that these patients had many of symptoms related to acute stress and their related needs in the early recovery stage. The findings would enhance the health professions can design early interventions to treat acute stress symptoms in critical care units. It would help patients in the restore their social and occupational functions, and prevent the development of PTSD. It is suggested integrated interdisciplinary care and support are crucial helping patients recovery.