

Life after a coronary artery bypass graft: the lived experience of Maltese men

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Abstract

Introduction: Cardiac surgery is frequently described as a "multidimensional phenomenon"; spanning over the biological, psychological and social fields. Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) is well known to encompass extensive stress and emotions on the patient. There is however, a paucity of psychosocial literature on the Maltese patient's experiences of this procedure. This study therefore aimed to explore the lived experience of undergoing CABG in Maltese men. **Methods:** A qualitative approach, namely Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used and audio recorded semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with Maltese men who had undergone CABG. The recruited participants were all between the age of 55 and 71 and were recruited through purposive sampling. **Results and Discussion:** Five major themes were extrapolated from the participant's narratives during data analysis through IPA. Prevailing factors originated from the experience involve dealing with the knowledge of undergoing major heart surgery, attitudes towards the outcome of the procedure, perceived change of self, struggles with anxiety and depression and the importance of spiritual and family support. **Conclusion:** Findings show that each of the mentioned factors may not only influence patients' recovery from CABG, but may also impact a person's entire lifetime. Recommendations for future research proposed the implementation of a longitudinal study for better comprehension of the lasting impacts of CABG. Sustained psychological support throughout the CABG experience is also highly advised.