

# Examining illness narratives with Emotional Graph of Illness Trajectory

<b>Submission date</b> 22/04/2024	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 25/04/2024	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 17/06/2024	<b>Condition category</b> Surgery	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Through chronic illness, the continuity of life is disrupted, the narrative coherence of the life story is broken, and this traumatic structured crisis can result in a loss of emotional balance and a negative shift in emotion regulation. It makes it difficult to adaptively cope with the psychological distress and physical symptoms of illness in both the short and long term. The construction of illness narratives can help in building a coherent picture and in adaptive emotion regulation processes. Our objective was to examine the associations of emotion-focused illness narratives with postoperative emotional and mood state, perceived stress, quality of life and illness perception.

### Who can participate?

Anyone aged between 18 and 65 years who has undergone surgery for breast, lung, vascular or gastrointestinal disease or cancer and who agrees to take part in the study.

### What does the study involve?

The study examines the patients' disease process in terms of changes in emotional state. Based on the patient's narrative, we will determine his/her illness narrative, assess his/her postoperative psychological state and examine whether there is a relationship between postoperative psychological factors and the type of illness narrative.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The main benefit of participating is the own creating of emotion-focused illness narrative, and the expression of emotions connecting to the illness trajectory. There is no risk of participation.

### Where is the study run from?

Department of Surgery, Albert Szent-Györgyi Health Centre, University of Szeged (Hungary)

### When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

September 2020 to May 2024

### Who is funding the study?

Department of Surgery, Albert Szent-Györgyi Health Centre, University of Szeged (Hungary)

Who is the main contact?  
Tünde Lévai (levai.tunde@med.u-szeged.hu)

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

### Contact name

Miss Tünde Lévai

### ORCID ID

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6560-6364>

### Contact details

Semmelweis street 8

Szeged

Hungary

6725

+36 302180858

levai.tunde.1@med.u-szeged.hu

## Additional identifiers

### Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

### ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)

Nil known

### Protocol serial number

Nil known

## Study information

### Scientific Title

Examining illness narratives in the context of post-operative psychological state: a mixed methods study of the emotion-focused illness narratives.

### Study objectives

We use the Emotional Graph of the Illness Process to understand the characteristics of the three types of illness narratives in the context of the postoperative psychological state, and therefore our exploratory research is based on a research question rather than a hypothesis. Our primary research question was: What are the differences between the chaos story, the restitution story and the quest story groups regarding postoperative psychological status?

### Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

**Ethics approval(s)**

approved 28/09/2020, Regional Research Ethics Committee (RKEB) of the University of Szeged, Albert Szent-Györgyi Health Centre (Dugonics square 13., Szeged, 6720, Hungary; +36 62/545-997; office.rkeb@med.u-szeged.hu), ref: 145/2020-SZTE

**Study design**

Observational cross-sectional single-centre study

**Primary study design**

Observational

**Study type(s)**

Screening

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Psychological state and illness narrative of patients who have undergone surgery

**Interventions**

All patients are examined within five days of their operation. The test is taken once. During the test assessment, the patient first completes a questionnaire package consisting of the Spielberger State and Trait Anxiety Inventory, Beck Depression Inventory, Perceived Stress Scale, Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire, EQ-5D-3L Quality of Life Questionnaire. Then, the Emotional Graph of Illness Trajectory will be recorded in a semi-structured interview, during which the patient will draw a graph of the changes in emotional state accompanying the illness trajectory. This graph contains numeric data on 0-100% range, which show us the average emotional intensity during the illness process. The emotional intensity belongs to one emotion, elicited by the patient as the most dominant emotion accompanying the disease process.

**Intervention Type**

Other

**Primary outcome(s)**

Emotional Graph of Illness Trajectory measured during interview at a single time point

**Key secondary outcome(s)**

Measured at a single time point:

1. State and trait anxiety: Spielberger State and Trait Anxiety Inventory
2. Depression: Beck Depression Inventory
3. Perceived stress: Perceived Stress Scale
4. Illness perception: Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire
5. Quality of Life: EQ-5D-3L
6. The type of illness narratives, which are identified in the content analysis of the patient interview

**Completion date**

31/05/2024

**Eligibility****Key inclusion criteria**

1. Over 18 years of age
2. A diagnosis of chronic illness or malignant tumour
3. Surgery in the last five days for a chronic disease or cancer
4. Literacy skills to read and write

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Adult

**Lower age limit**

18 years

**Upper age limit**

65 years

**Sex**

All

**Key exclusion criteria**

Severe psychiatric or neurological illness

**Date of first enrolment**

01/10/2020

**Date of final enrolment**

31/05/2024

## **Locations**

**Countries of recruitment**

Hungary

**Study participating centre**

Department of Surgery, Albert Szent-Györgyi Health Centre, University of Szeged

Semmelweis street 8

Szeged

Hungary

6725

## **Sponsor information**

## Organisation

Albert Szent-Györgyi Health Centre, University of Szeged

## Funder(s)

### Funder type

University/education

### Funder Name

Szegedi Tudományegyetem

### Alternative Name(s)

University of Szeged, University of Szeged, Hungary, SZTE

### Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

### Funding Body Subtype

Universities (academic only)

### Location

Hungary

## Results and Publications

### Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be stored in a publicly available repository; [URL: <https://osf.io/sytf5>].

The data are publicly available through the Open Science Framework. Participants have given their consent for their data to be used for research purposes, and each patient has a serial number instead of a name to ensure anonymity. The publicly available data include patient sociodemographic data, type of surgery, diagnosis, as well as the results obtained from the questionnaires and the numerical results obtained from the Emotional Graph of Illness Trajectory.

### IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

### Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes