

In/Dependence, Technology, and Lives of Value: Preliminary Findings from a Critical Narrative Study with Young Adults Living with Home Mechanical Ventilation

Elizabeth Straus, MN, RN, COI
PhD candidate, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia

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Background: The concepts of quality of life and well-being have garnered significant attention in research with persons using long-term mechanical ventilation (HMV); however, few studies have explored these concepts with young adults living with HMV. Without these perspectives, there is a risk that normative understandings of what constitutes a good and independent adult life can be taken up, ignoring other possibilities and potentially leading to exclusion.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to understand 'living well' with young adults living with HMV. Three questions informed the study: (1) How do young adults living with HMV experience everyday life?; (2) How do social structures and social conditions influence these young adult's experiences?; (3) In what ways do discourses and assumptions influence these young adult's experiences?

Methods: A critical narrative inquiry methodology informed the study. Young adults (n=5; ages 18-40 years) living with HMV were recruited. Generation of field texts began with an initial conversation. Participants then generated a collection of photographs that reflected what was important, meaningful and/or distressing in their lives, and what made their lives easier or harder and shared stories about the photographs. Within- and across-participant analysis is being conducted using a critical narrative analysis approach.

Findings: This presentation will focus on one thread of preliminary findings, which demonstrates how participants were taking up, negotiating, and reconstituting dominant discourses of independence and reliance on technology in their narratives. The findings also make visible the complex interplay of bodies, technologies, others, social structures and conditions, and discourses that influence how independence is understood, valued, and lived in these young adults' lives.

Implications: Through surfacing how social structures and discourses of independence influence the lives of these young adults, nurses can consider creative possibilities to support well-being and inclusion and challenge assumptions about meaningful lives with HMV.