One Year Caring: A longitudinal Narrative Study on Men’s Perspectives of Caring for a Female Partner with Cancer

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Overview

Situating my research – background and rationale

Study details and analytical framework

2 extracts

Key findings
# Why caring and why men?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring global issue</th>
<th>42-51% carers are men</th>
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<td>9 million in UK</td>
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<th>35% cancer carer samples men</th>
<th>Implications - conceptualisation of care</th>
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"Why caring and why men?"
The study

**Design**
- Narrative
- Longitudinal – 3 each over a year
- Social constructionism
- Discourse

**Participants**
- 8 men
- 32-75 years
- White British
- Breast, Gynaecological & Oesophageal cancer

**Setting**
- Scotland
- Men recruited through partner, social media and word of mouth
Analytical framework

**Structural**
- Labov & Waletsky
- Structure and form

**1. Abstract**
- 2. Orientation
- 3. Complicating Action
- 4. Evaluation
- 5. Resolution
- 6. Coda

**Performance**
- Riessman
- Context and interaction

**Why was the narrative developed that way?**
- What identities are performed or suggested?
- What response of the listener?

**Multi-layered interpretation**
- 8 stories
- 4 scenes
Jack's Story

Porter's dad dies of cancer

7 months before interview
Diagnosis
Missed side effects
Treatment
Researching healthy clubs
Waiting less
Lack acknowledgment by Drs.
Losing trust
Back home
Finished treatment
Arguments
Caring role diminishes
Partner back to work
Relationship break up

Interview [home]

STRUCTURE
Stories about past - heightens effect
Use time emphasised change - then now (or)
Evaluations - awful, didn't expect exhausted
LOT strain

PERFORMANCE
Man before cancer - motivated by work
Age - major positive
Dysfunction - vulnerable

THEORY LITERATURE
Treadmill positioning
by Drs.
Hochschild
Emotional state
Men - delivery task based approach
Goffman front + backstage
Masculine norms - use to justify behaviour

Putting on a front - fine but - guilt
'Is he a good person' - expects +
Perspective
Cathartic role of the interview
Trying to create a conclusion
Tracing

Not validated
Some accounts
Analysis - summary

- Transcription & identify narratives
- Note taking - what is the plot etc
- Structure & Content/ context
- 8 stories
- 4 scenes
Stories to scenes

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<td>Change</td>
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Scene One: ‘In that moment life changes’
Scene Two: ‘Caring but not a carer’
Scene Three: ‘Opening the valve’
Scene Four: ‘Repercussions’
“I'm one of these people, if I've got a problem, I just can't stop thinking and talking about it until I've dealt with it, and it's away. But the problem is, this is a problem that's never gonna go away. Even if she does manage to get a cure, as such, she's still gonna be living with very bad side-effects for the rest of her life, due to the scar tissue from the radiotherapy. And potentially, any chemo side-effects, which are there long term. So, it's like a, it's a lose/lose either way. And I try my best, obviously, to tone things down, but I just find myself, I promise myself when we go home, I'm not gonna talk about it, and I'm going to be positive and try and look as if I'm in a good mood.

But as soon as I get in the house and I see her face, I just can't help but try and figure out, and ask her how's she's feeling – what are you thinking about, do you feel strong? It's just the wrong way to go about it. And I can see it, but I just couldn't, from a selfish perspective, I just couldn't help talking about it constantly. But in some weird way, I felt I didn't want to talk about it to anybody other than Sally. But it's horrible, I just have a permanent feeling, a sick feeling in my stomach, that I can't get rid of’. (Jack, 32)
“It feels ongoing...as we’re further and further away from the cancer, the act of the physical cancer experience which was obviously chemo and a mastectomy and hospital treatment surrounding that, you do think that’s everything’s repaired but it’s not. And it’s...that’s okay, it’s an ongoing process. But I don’t think there is enough in place for that aftercare for those that want it or want to acknowledge it. I think everybody needs it. But whether everybody will acknowledge that they need it or not is up to them. I spoke to a...back in the summertime last year actually, a farmer who...I’d actually spoken to his wife, they’re 15 years older than me probably. I’d spoken to the wife one day and she said, oh I haven’t seen you about for a while. I says, no my wife went through cancer and...breast cancer. And then we...she says, oh I had that as well. And...so we had a wee chat. Very brief. So then I met the husband a few weeks later on the farm actually and we were just...we were actually leaning over a gate, which is a great way to get farmers to open up. Really is. And we’re leaning over a gate and I says, I didn’t realise your wife had had a mastectomy. I says, it’s not easy, is it? And this was a guy 20 years later and you just...you could you see the tears going down...It’s tough. He says, that was tough. He said, I don’t forget it.

JY - can you relate to that?

Yes. I can do, yes. I can do. It’s the loneliness of it” (David, 62).
Key findings

- **Motivations** for endorsing and performing masculine roles – not just about being the ‘strong’ one.

- **Challenge assumptions** about male carers - men are distressed and source of stress was putting on a ‘front’.

- Less known about **love and emotion management** in male caring.

- Caring **shouldn’t be measured in isolated parts** – need more research moves away from researchers assumptions about outcomes (depression, anxiety etc.)

- **Longitudinal** – capturing change and movement was a strength.

- Implications practice – **not a homogenous group**/tailored support
Gender differences in research samples of family carers of adults with cancer: a systematic review

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Rising global demand for informal care makes it increasingly important to have a comprehensive understanding of carers’ experiences. However, research is thought to be skewed towards women’s experience, leading some to call men ‘forgotten carers’. A systematic review following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis guidelines was conducted to assess the gender balance of study samples of family carers of someone living with cancer. A total of 82 articles involving 14,352 participants were reviewed. Overall, 35.5 per cent of participants were men and 64.5 per cent were women. Researchers should seek to overcome barriers to men’s participation in carer research in order to ensure the experiences of male and female carers are recognised through research.
Thank you...any questions?

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