

XVII Isa World Congress of sociology, 11-17 July, 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden

Session 3: Health, illness and embodiment

Organizer: Laura Hurd Clarke, University of British Columbia, Canada, laura.hurd.clarke@ubc.ca

Papers that critically examine embodiment and the disciplining of the body in relation to health and illness are invited. Papers might address (but are not limited to) the role of technology, challenges to embodied identity, the negotiation of social norms such as healthism, and the lived experience of a particular disease or illness.

Michèle BAUMANN¹, Katia LURBE PUERTO¹, Etienne LE BIHAN¹, Maria-Engracia LEANDRO²

University of Luxembourg, INSIDE, L-7201 Walferdange. Corresponding author: michele.baumann@uni.lu

²University of Minho, Faculty of Social Sciences, Braga (Portugal)

With the financial support of the Fonds National de la Recherche du Grand-duché de Luxembourg.

Social and Psychological Repercussions within Two Years Post-Stroke, Patient-Caregiver in Luxembourg and Portugal: A couples' Approach Study.

Summary

This study aims to improve our understanding of the impact of stroke on the lives of patients & principal caregivers (PCs). The objective was to analyze agreement within patient-caregiver couples in responses to statements concerning the psychological & social repercussions of stroke.

Two years post-stroke, 97 patient-PC pairs were administered questionnaires at home. Logistic regression was used to analyze data on 50 couples of questionnaires from Luxembourg (Lux) & 47 from Portugal (Por); 60% of patients were men, with average ages of 65 years in Luxembourg & 71 years in Portugal; 75% of carers were women aged on average 61.5 years (Lux) & 61 years (Por).

Responses to the question "*Are you happy or not?*" were more correlated with concordance within patient-caregiver couples' statements concerning the psychological and social repercussions of stroke than were socioeconomic characteristics (nationality, age, having finished elementary school or not). Patients who considered themselves happy were more likely to give answers close to those of their caregivers. This was true particularly in the domain of stroke repercussions on relationships with friends: "*sympathy shown by friends and relations*", "*loss of friends*", "*friends bothered by the handicap*" & "*ties maintained & even strengthened*". Conversely, PCs who described themselves as happy were less likely to agree with the patient they cared for. Patient-PC couples emphasised the consequences of a stroke on self-image in the face of the "*loss of many friends*" & the fact that "*the patient feels devalued*".

Family & social life is disrupted by stroke, and friendly relationships are put under stress. Patient-caregiver coherence is central, not least in its effect on quality of life. Do couples' feelings about life have a decisive role in the reconstruction of the identities of patients and caregivers? What part will trust play in that process?

Keys words: stroke patient – familial repercussions – caregiver – identity – social network -