LIVING IN PARTNERSHIP: A GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS OF HOW OLDER ADULTS ASSIGN MEANING TO THEIR IMPLANTED DEFIBRILLATOR

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Goals of the Presentation

- Describe implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD)
- Provide brief background of study question.
  - Focus on grounded theory methodology,
    - Underpinnings of Symbolic Interactionism (SI)
    - Use of Positional Maps.
- Discuss model: Living in Partnership.
- Suggest implications of study findings.
Implantable Cardioverter defibrillator

1. What does it look like?

2. How does it work?

3. When is it indicated?
MAJOR Life Threat

Ventricular Fibrillation

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How does having an ICD affect the day-to-day life of patients and their families, from the perspective of the older adult?
Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD)

DEFINITION:

- Unexpected circulatory arrest,
- occurring within an hour of the onset of symptoms,
- usually due to a cardiac arrhythmia (Zipes, 2006).
Research Gap

- Over 25 yrs of research has identified those at highest risk for SCD, amendable to ICD therapy.

- Less than 25% of participants in these studies were ≥65 yrs. (Pellegrini, et.al, 2008)

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Shifting emphasis??

Securing life through technology acceptance (Burke, 1996)

Dealing with technology through chronic disease acceptance?? (2009)
Theoretical Framework

Uncertainty in Illness

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To examine the impact of the ICD on daily living - as conveyed by study participants.
Recruitment

Eligibility Criteria:

- At least age 65
- Currently have an ICD in place
- At least one year from the implantation date
- English speaking
- Able to be interviewed with the S.F. Bay area

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Study Sample

- **N = 24** (20 male; 4 female)
- **Ages 65 – 91** (mean 76 yrs)
- **Post-implant 2-19 years** (mean 6 yrs)
- **Community-dwellers**
- **Majority married** (13/24)
- **21 Retired** (3 worked PT)
Tell me about having an ICD
What is it like for you?
Are you aware of it being present?
How do you experience that?
How long has it been now that you’ve had the ICD?
Has your experience with it changed over time? Tell me about that.
Interview Guide

- What has it been like for your family?
- Do you know anyone else who has an ICD? When and with whom do you talk about the device with? What kind of things do you talk about?
- Tell me about your future plans?
- Is there anything that I haven’t touched on that you feel is important for me to know?
Grounded Theory Methodology

- Glaser and Strauss (1967)
- Clark (2005)
- Charmaz (2006)
Symbolic Interactionism (SI)

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.

2. Meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others.

3. Meanings are handled in, and modified through interpretative processes used by the person dealing with the things that are encountered.

( Herbert Blumer, 1969)

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Data Collection and Analysis

- Digitally recorded interviews, transcribed verbatim, reviewed for accuracy.
- Line by line coding – naming each line; incident by incident; breaks up data
- Focused coding – more directed, selective and conceptual
- Axial Coding – answers when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences.
“I’m 71. I’m at the age where friends and acquaintances have had open heart surgery and it’s happening all the time.

People come back from it, in some cases not so good, in other case, great. Its miracle stuff, and that’s how I view this stuff.

They put this little thing in and that’s it, nothing, forget it. Do your stuff. Take your grandchildren to a movie. It’s fabulous.

I never cease to be amazed by what’s happening in the life of sciences today.”

-Mr. Mercedes, 2009
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Entering into the partnership

Managing the partnership

Contemplating or not contemplating dissolving the partnership
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position determining decision</th>
<th>Defining determinate</th>
<th>Characteristic pattern</th>
<th>Expectation for ICD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>ICD as Only option</em></td>
<td>Controlling timing of death</td>
<td>Reactive and Decisive</td>
<td>Life saving</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>ICD as Next option</em></td>
<td>Managing symptoms</td>
<td>Expected and routine</td>
<td>Life extending</td>
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Assigning meaning

- Profound consious state of partnership awareness

Living for a Shock

- Generally not aware but something has to done to maintain the partnership

Just Living

- Lack of awareness of partnership
Mr. John James: “One time that I know I passed out on the street. The thing revived me. And I wasn’t even aware of what had gone on, except that I had fallen down and cut my nose. And so it was easy for me with that experience to think of the thing as definitely a boom.”
Mr. John James: “When it was first put in, it went off a few times; it hurt, and I did not pass out. When I came to the hospital and got checked outpatient style, the technicians looked at it and said, well, you know, this really shouldn’t have gone off. It’s not suppose to you know; it wasn’t that big of a deal.”
People construct their realities from the symbols around them through interaction

Mr. John James: “I remember the thing going off every few minutes practically beating me to dead. So this is when it changed from a life saver to being a life threatener. In other words, I have this thing in my body, you know, that is my enemy.”
Contemplating Dissolving the Partnership
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defining determinate</th>
<th>Characteristic Assumption/Pattern</th>
<th>Interpretation of Meaning of ICD</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Not Contemplating Dissolving Partnership</em></td>
<td>Not my Decision To Make</td>
<td>Doctor decides</td>
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<td>Family decides</td>
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<td>God decides</td>
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<td>Timing isn’t right</td>
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<td>Avoiding conversation</td>
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<td>Doctor unwilling</td>
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<td>Family unable – lack of knowledge, pain of loss</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Contemplating Dissolving Partnership</em></td>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>Expectations of Aging</td>
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<td>Life is no longer worth living</td>
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Explore the phenomenon of “Identity Rupture” that emerged as an interpretation of a public demonstration of a device shock.
Ms. Jean: “I had a brief 5-minute video clip to show in the middle of my lecture. I went and sat down in the front row of the audience to watch the video, and during that time I had another jolt and when you have these, your whole body jerks. I don’t know if anyone noticed because people would think I just had a sneeze or something. And then, if you can believe it, I went back up and finished my lecture, and it was a great lecture and people really liked it. But I was a wreck.”
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THANK YOU!

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