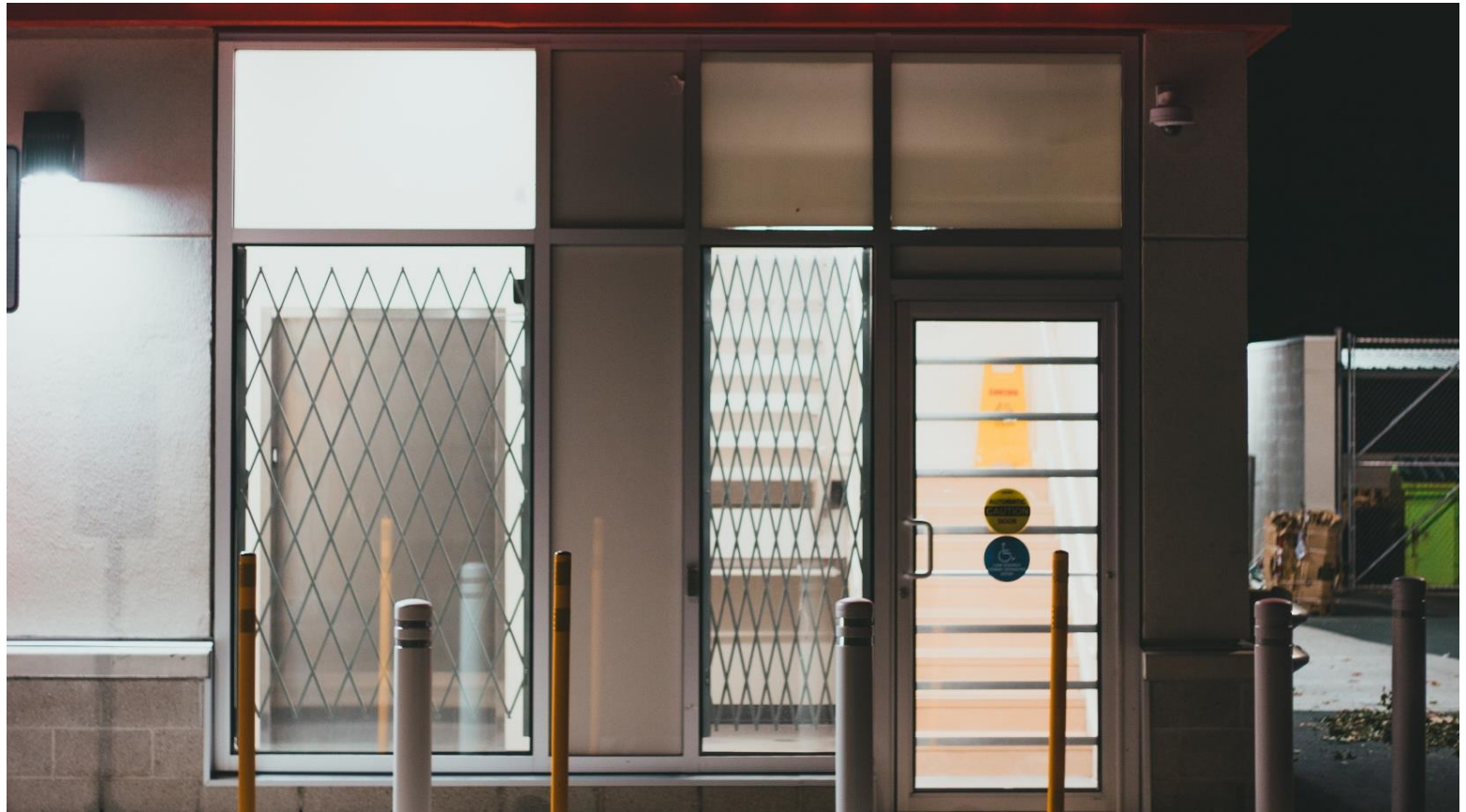




A narrative analysis of patient biographies elicited in the hospital setting

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Biology and biography



Biographical approaches to clinical practice

“Eliciting a person’s life story from either individuals and/or their family”

Patient diaries



Life story work (LSW)



Dignity therapy (DT)



Benefits of integrating patients' biographies in clinical practice

- Contribute to a **more humane and person-centered care (PCC)** (Charon 2012)
- Bring patients to a **new level of trust** in their providers and improve the **therapeutic relationship** (Horwitz et al. 2021)
- Represent a **therapeutic and empowering instrument** (Charon 2001; Lai et al. 2018)
- Shed light on **prominent ethical issues** that may otherwise go unnoticed (Curtis 2013; Childress et al. 2020; Montello 2014; Jones 1999)
- Represent a **transformative tool for providers** (Egan et al. 2007; Sands et al. 2008)
- Enhance **more effective, more efficient care** (Charon 2001)
 - Patients tell the “whole story”
 - More focused diagnostic exercise
 - Higher chances of reaching the correct diagnosis
 - Greater patient compliance
 - Fewer health care costs



Biographies are
written by a family
member

Biographies are
edited by a
professional

“Conoscersi meglio è curare meglio”

Studio “conoscersi meglio è curare meglio”

Fase preliminare

Gentile Signora, Egregio Signore,

Stiamo programmando uno studio su come conoscerla meglio potrebbe aiutarci a prendere cura di lei in maniera più personalizzata, e a esaudire in modo più soddisfacente le sue attese.

In questa fase stiamo mettendo a punto le domande importanti, e le chiediamo il suo aiuto, che evidentemente è facoltativo: il suo eventuale rifiuto non influenzerà il nostro impegno nei suoi confronti.

La preghiamo di redigere una breve di biografia (una-due facciate A4 dattiloscritte).
La può scrivere liberamente, ma vorremmo che contenesse gli elementi seguenti:


- 1) Elementi biografici essenziali,
- 2) Cosa è importante per lei,
- 3) Cosa è importante che noi sappiamo per occuparci di lei come persona e non solo come paziente, in particolare riguardo all'ospedalizzazione.

scriverla a mano e ci occuperemo di trascriverla;
o metterle a disposizione una/o dei nostri
untamento a sua convenienza.

meglio@eoc.ch sarà allegato alla sua cartella di
ermieristici che si occupano di lei almeno una

grafia delle persone che compongono lo staff del





What do patients share and
how do they share it?
How can this help us better
understand what people value
in their care?



Questions, methods, and sample

■ Questions

- What are some of the **commonalities and differences** among the biographies in the forms that patients use?
- Where are the “**narrative turns**” in each of the biographies?
- What do **patients choose to focus on** when they are given the chance to tell the care team about themselves?

■ Methods

- Three team members **conducted a narrative analysis of each biography independently** and then discussed the analyses during weekly calls
- Analyses involved **blocking out the text according to time** (past, present, and future) and **level of intimacy** (internals/externals)

■ Sample

- 10 randomly selected biographies (out of 60) written by 7 women and 3 men (age range = 46-68)

Patients used a striking level of detail to tell their life stories

“

My name is Laura, I was born in 1972 in Lisbon, Portugal. My father died at the age of 71 and my mother at the age of 92. I have an older sister who was born in 1966. She has three wonderful kids: Joshua, Michael, and Lisa.

”



**Patients want to be recognized by
their providers through a
comprehensive account
of their identity**

“ I find myself resistant to listening to the experiences or anecdotes of friends and family who have navigated this challenging journey before. At the same time, I’m grappling with the struggle of projecting a different version of myself. It’s hard to laugh when there’s an internal void, and engaging in conversation becomes taxing when I feel drained inside.

”

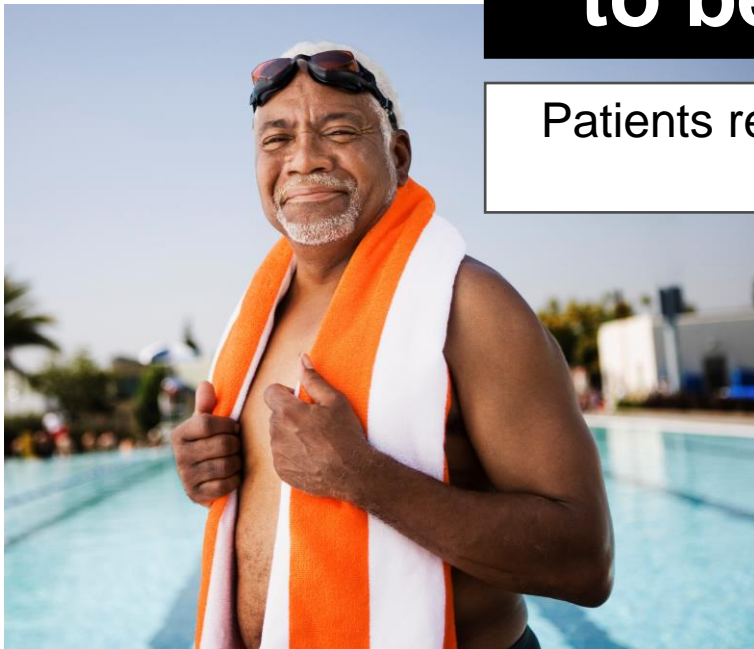


Patients shared intimate details about their past, present, and future

Patients want to establish meaningful relationships with their providers

Patients want their valued identities to be protected by their providers

Patients recognized a risk that their identities may go unseen or be damaged inside the hospital



“

Dear Doctor,
You asked me to write about who I am beyond my illness. Let me begin by saying that I am a 63-year-old “boy.” Challenges hardly dampen my spirits. I navigate life with an innate optimism, consistently seeking the positive aspects in every situation. [...] I am grateful for the opportunity of writing about myself.

”

Writing patient biographies as a powerful tool



It allows providers to **know their patients as unique persons through a personal account of their identity.**



It facilitates the **establishment and strengthening of meaningful connections** between patients and providers.



It mitigates patients' sense of risk that their identity may be damaged and **may contribute to safeguarding patients' identities during their hospitalization.**





MEDICAL CLINIC

Writing represents a twofold opportunity
for patients to **share** their unique story
for providers to **hold** it during their care



Thank you





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