

Overcoming Life Discontinuity Following Ileostomy Surgery

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Introduction

Gastrointestinal surgery impacts all aspects of a person's life. Appropriate nursing care can be instrumental in helping the patient to make the significant physical, social and psychological adjustments that are required for successful adaptation to life with a stoma.

Purpose

This study investigates the relationship of a binary assessment of life discontinuity associated with ileostomy surgery (Interrupted or Continuing) with time since surgery.

Methodology

Data source

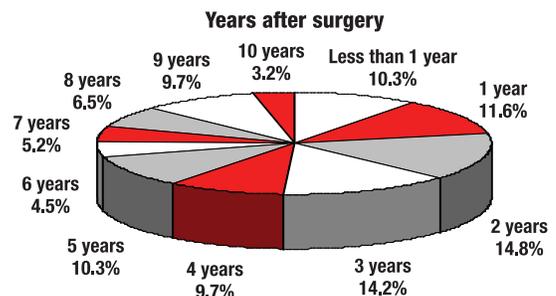
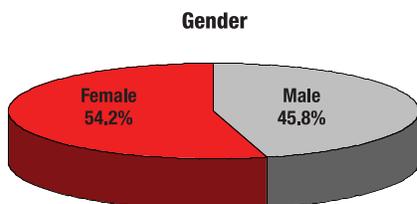
Ostomy Comprehensive Health and Life Assessment (N = 612)

Subset (n = 155) includes:

Single ileostomy stoma
Not more than ten years post-operative

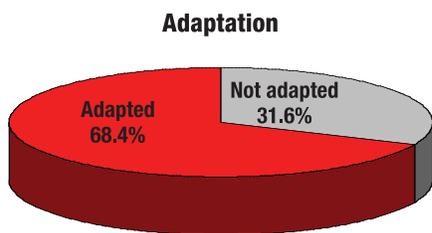
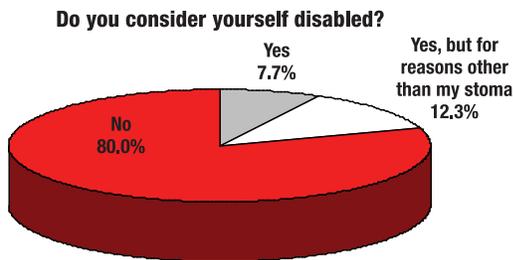
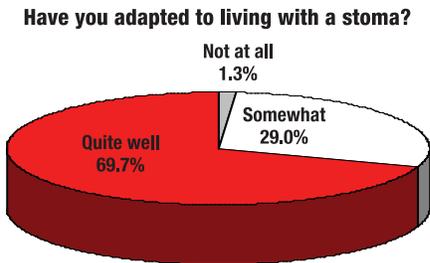
Strata

Gender
Years after surgery



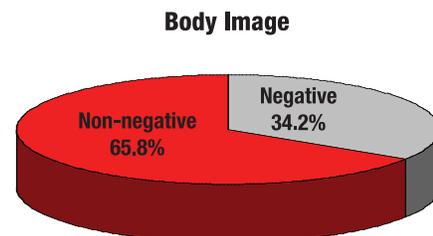
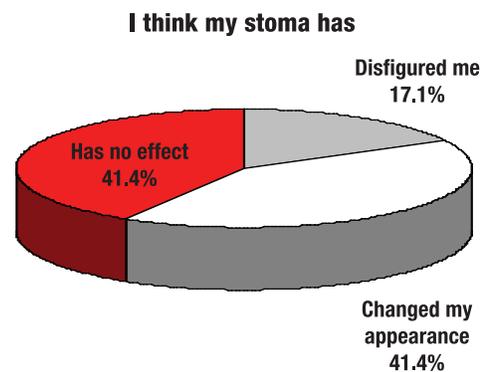
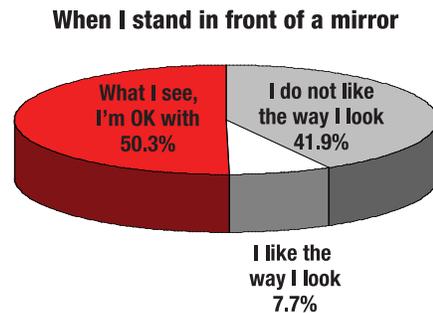
Adaptation

A person who has adapted to living with a stoma is identified by having responded, "Yes, quite well" to the question "Have you adapted to living with a stoma?" and having also indicated that they do not consider themselves disabled because of their stoma.



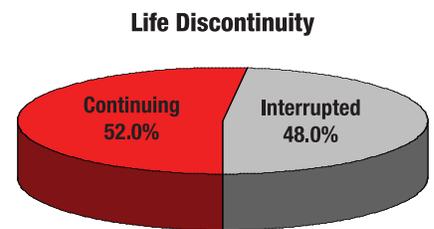
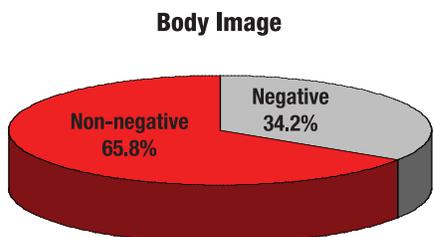
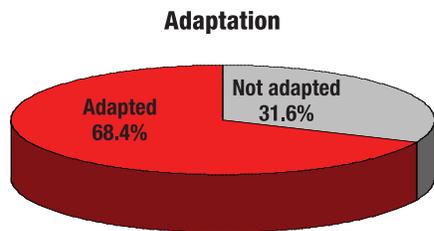
Body Image

Body Image was assessed by having the respondents choose options to complete the statements, "When I stand in front of a mirror..." and "I think my stoma has..." Those responding, "I do not like the way I look" to the former and "changed my appearance" or "disfigured me" to the latter are defined as having a negative body image attributable to their stoma.



Life Discontinuity

Using the terminology developed here, a person who has overcome the life discontinuity associated with ileostomy surgery (Continuing) is a person who has adapted to life with a stoma and reports no negative body image attributable to their stoma.



Results

The data suggest that the odds of a participant reporting the combination of attitudes associated with overcoming life discontinuity increase by 24.5 percent each year after surgery (Figure 1). A model using years after surgery and gender as predictors correctly classified 61.8 percent of the observations that were used to develop the model.

However, when Body Image and Adaptation are modeled separately, the odds of reporting non-negative body image (Figure 2) remain similar over the 10-year

period while the odds of having adapted to living with a stoma (Figure 3) increase at a higher rate (35.2 percent each year) than those of overcoming life discontinuity.

Figure 1

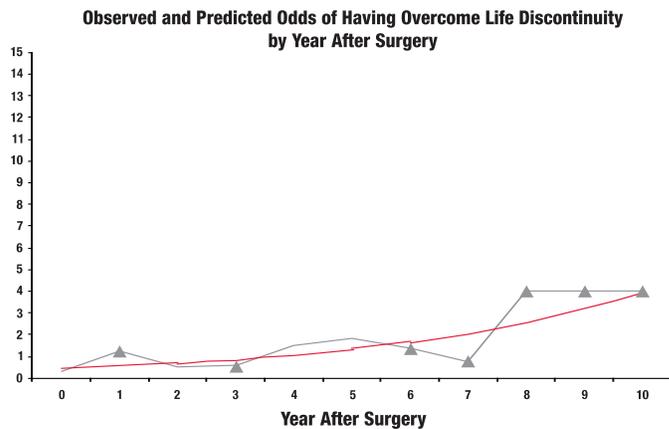


Figure 2

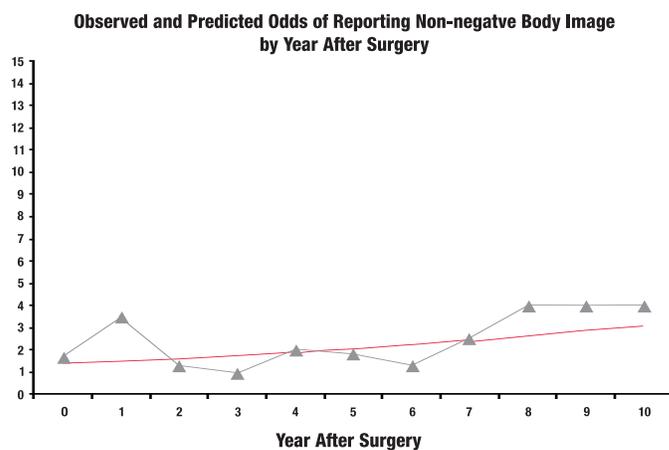
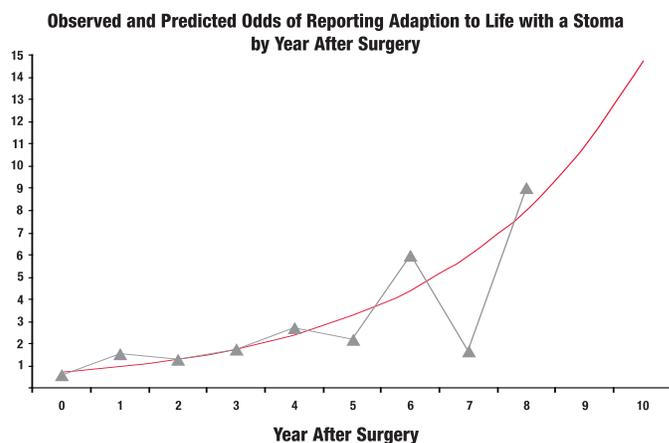


Figure 3



Conclusions

The data suggest that attitudes associated with overcoming life discontinuity change significantly within the first ten years following ileostomy surgery; this finding is not at all unexpected. However, the available evidence also suggests that body image is not a primary factor in this change. Further investigation of the recovery process, particularly the underlying mechanisms of adaptation to life with a stoma, may suggest practice innovations that will improve ileostomy patient outcomes.

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