

Appendix 1. Development of themes

Theme: Surviving and Controlling Cancer

Issues identified on initial coding	Outcome	Outcome theme
Being cured of cancer Cancer returning to other parts of the body Cancer returning in the abdomen Possibility of cancer returning	Recurrence of Cancer	Surviving and Controlling Cancer
Being able to live (a little/a lot) longer Being alive/surviving for a 'long time' Chances of (not) dying from cancer Chances of survival	Survival	

Theme: Adverse events following surgery

Issues identified on initial coding	Outcome	Outcome theme
Complications related to anaesthesia	Anaesthetic complications	Adverse events following of Surgery
Anastomotic leak Anastomotic stricture	Anastomotic complications	
Internal bleeding requiring further intervention	Bleeding	
Concern about cardiac complications in context of previous myocardial infarction Racing heart beat	Cardiac complications	
Stroke following surgery	Cerebro-vascular complications	
Bowel perforation Gastro-intestinal symptoms e.g. constipation Obstruction of bowel	Intestinal complications	
Epidural related complications Hallucinations Overdose of medications such as morphine Side effects of sedatives	Medication related complications	
Drains and tubes to manage complications Endoscopic treatment of anastomotic stricture Requiring further surgery to manage complications	Need for re-intervention	

Surgery for incisional hernia		
‘Surviving’ surgery Dying from a complication of surgery Dying on the operating table	Peri-operative death	
Hospital acquired pneumonia Pleural effusion Pneumothorax	Respiratory complications	
Re-admission due to complications such as infections Re-admission due to pain	Re-admission to hospital	
Wound dehiscence Wound infection Wound leak Wound numbness	Wound complications	
Catheter-related problems	Urinary complications	

Theme: Long-term impact of surgery

Issues identified on initial coding	Outcome	Outcome theme
Being able to enjoy a good quality of life Uncertainty as to what life will be like following surgery	Overall ‘quality of life’	Long-term impact of surgery
Changes in mood Clinical depression Feeling ‘abnormal’ and ‘different’ to others Feelings of insecurity Feelings of isolation Issues related to body image Low mood	Psychological impact	
Being able to enjoy eating again Being able to exercise again Being able to interact and socialise with others Being able to live ‘as they did before’ Being able to rely on oneself to undertake tasks Being able to undertake household activities	Returning to ‘normality’	

such as shopping and gardening		
Returning to employment		

Theme: Technical aspects of surgery

Issues identified on initial coding	Outcome	Outcome theme
'Cutting' the cancer out Ensuring no cancer is left behind Getting 'rid' of the cancer Inability to resect cancer at surgery Removing all lymph nodes Removing spleen if necessary	Complete resection of cancer	Technical aspects of surgery
Ability to perform laparoscopic 'keyhole' surgery Large scars	Size of incisions	
Duration of surgery	Duration of surgery	

Theme: Long-term problems following surgery

Issues identified on initial coding	Outcome	Outcome theme
Amounts able to eat and drink Being able to eat 'properly' Being able to eat at home Change in diet and types of food patient can consume Difficulties swallowing	Eating and Drinking	Long-term problems following surgery
Requirement for ongoing nutritional support Vitamin B12 deficiency	Nutritional problems	
Feeling persistently tired Feeling extremely weak/lethargic/tired Having no energy or stamina Loss of energy following simple tasks	Fatigue	
Abdominal bloating Belching Diarrhoea Dumping syndrome Excessive flatus Nausea	Gastro-intestinal symptoms	

Reflux symptoms (acid or bile) Vomiting		
Abdominal pain or cramps Headaches and migraines Long-term wound related pain Muscle cramps Pain on swallowing Painful abdominal distension or bloating	Chronic Pain	
Inability to regain weight to desired level Readjusting to new weight Speed of weight loss Weight loss in general	Weight problems	

Theme: Recovery Following surgery

Issues identified on initial coding	Outcome	Outcome theme
Post-operative plan for physiotherapy Restricted mobility due to drains and tubes attached Time to be able to undertake tasks such as standing up, walking or bathing	Ambulation	Recovery following surgery
Time before being allowed to eat and drink Time before bowel function returned	Return of gastrointestinal function	
Concern about being too unwell for further chemotherapy	Ability to have more chemotherapy	
Length of time in hospital Length of time in intensive care	Duration of hospital stay	
Length of time in pain Patterns of pain Requirement for analgesia Severity of pain	Post-operative pain	