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**THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF
ADULT PATIENTS COMMENCING RADIOTHERAPY
AND/OR CYTOTOXIC CHEMOTHERAPY**

**THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN NURSING AT MASSEY UNIVERSITY**

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Abstract

A Phenomenological Study Of The Lived Experience Of Adult Patients Commencing Radiotherapy And/Or Cytotoxic Chemotherapy

This study describes the lived experience of seven adult patients commencing radiotherapy and/or cytotoxic chemotherapy as outpatients at a regional cancer centre. Due to the long distances between their homes and the centre, six of the patients stayed in an oncology hostel during their treatment.

A phenomenological research method was used to describe the lived experience of these participants. Data analysis involved the development of themes from thematic statements, and a description of the central phenomena.

The central phenomena identified is the concept of "**walking alongside**" one's normal lifeworld. There is a strong theme in the lifeworld of lived time through "**counting up, down or through**" treatments and this provides a basic measurement of the "**distance of the trip**" of radiotherapy or cytotoxic chemotherapy treatment. Links to normality are sought by patients and are important if the patients are to return to their pre-treatment lifeworld.

By improving health professionals understanding of the experience of having radiotherapy or chemotherapy, they will be better able to support patients through the experience of having these treatments. Patients stand to benefit from health professionals understanding the experience of patients commencing radiotherapy and/or cytotoxic chemotherapy and assisting patients through facilitating this trip.

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