

# Survivors of cardiac arrest: Psychosocial, existential and spiritual needs and near-death experiences

By: [Tobias Kvist Stripp](#), *cand.med., ph.d.-student*

Primary Advisor: [Niels Christian Hvidt](#), *professor, dr.theol.*

## Background

In Denmark, about 7000 cardiac arrest is reported each year. Some patients survive their cardiac arrest and look forward to a life of varying degrees of impact and quality of life. Due to increased political focus on especially pre-hospital efforts, survival rates are increasing. However, there is limited knowledge of the psychosocial, existential and spiritual needs that arise in the wake of cardiac arrest. Foreign research indicates that many people experience a high level of unmet needs. Increased existential and spiritual well-being in patients has been shown to lead to improved quality of life, better disease coping, lower financial costs, and better survival. About 18% of cardiac arrest survivors also report an existential experience, broadly termed "near death experience" (NDE). NDE has not been studied in Denmark before.

## Aim

To examine:

- (1) What psychosocial, existential and spiritual resources and needs cardiac arrest survivors experience.
- (2) What existing psychosocial, existential and spiritual support do patients use and how they evaluate this support?
- (3) The extent to which psychosocial, existential and spiritual resources, needs and support affect the quality of life, illness perception and disease development of patients.

## Method

The study designed as a large ( $n > 1000$ ) national register and questionnaire-based cross-sectional study, preceded by qualitative interviews and questionnaire validation. The study population is identified through DANARREST and the Danish Heart Stop Register, which register respectively. cardiac arrest in and out of hospital. The questionnaire consists of a number of well-known validated tools, as well as a newly developed Danish translation of an internationally recognized NDE instrument.

## Project status

Stage I: Early startup.

Updated: 20-05-2020