

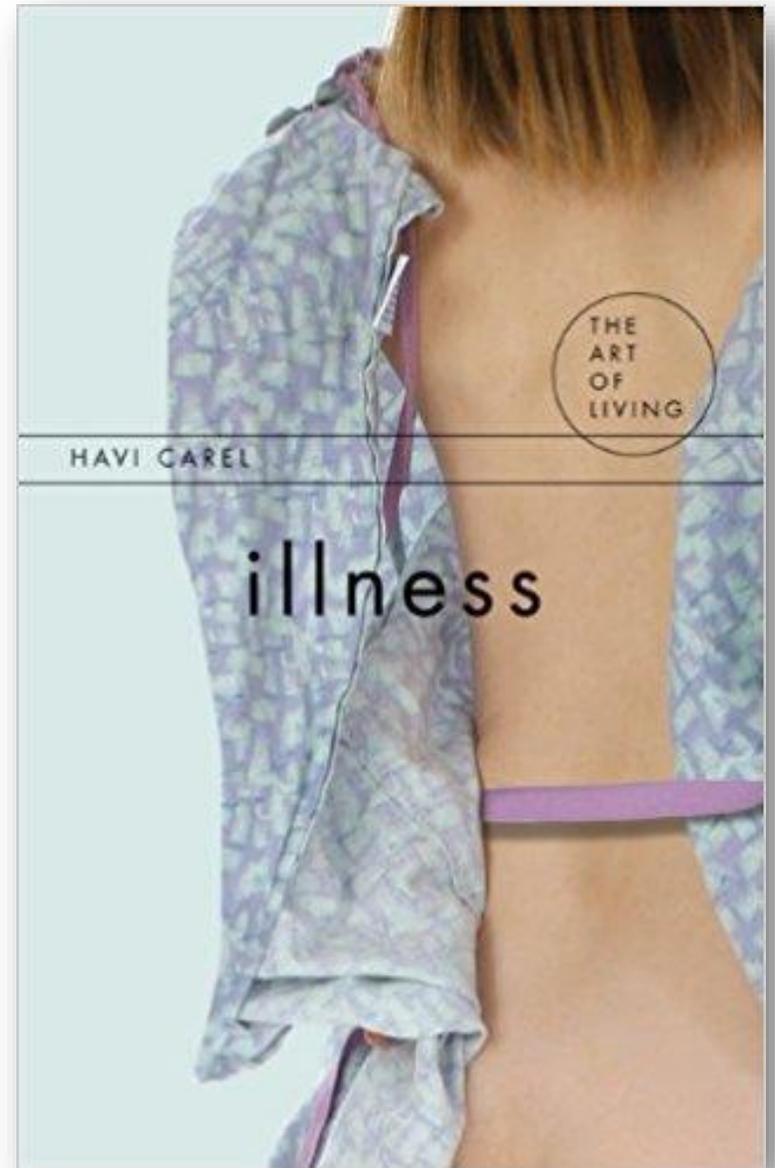


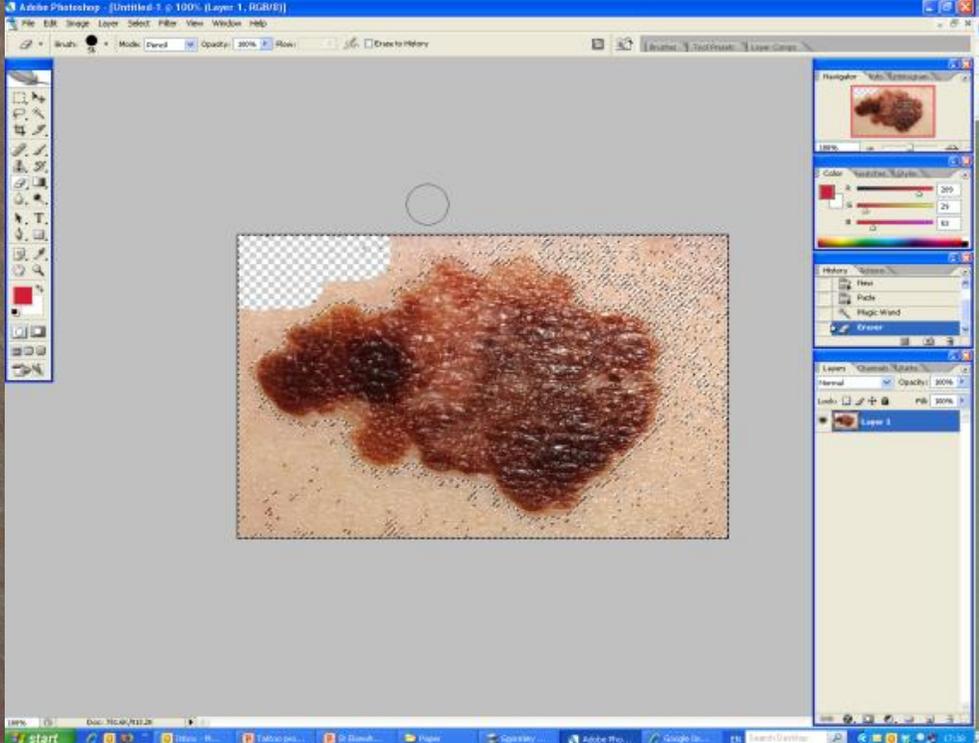
**Living with  
'melanoma'.... for a day**  
*a phenomenological analysis of  
medical students' experiences*

**Gerry Gormley, M Corr, G Roulston, T Dornan, C Blease and N King**

**“The complaint that seems to be near-universal is this: why am I not treated like a person? ...points to a certain culture in the medical world of treating disease as a purely biological dysfunction”**

Havi Carel, ‘The art of living, Illness’



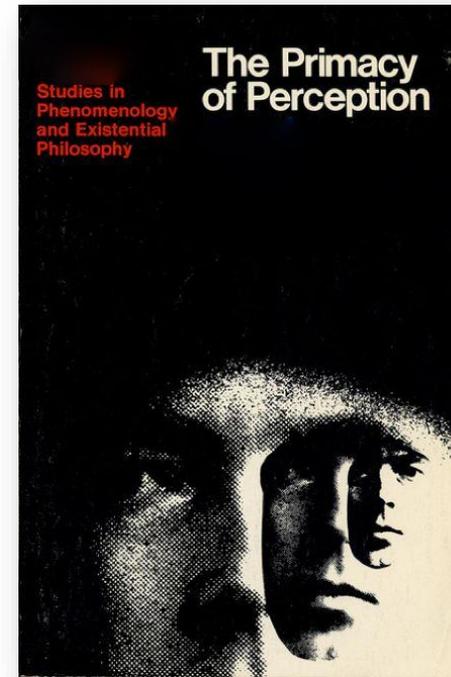


# RESEARCH QUESTION

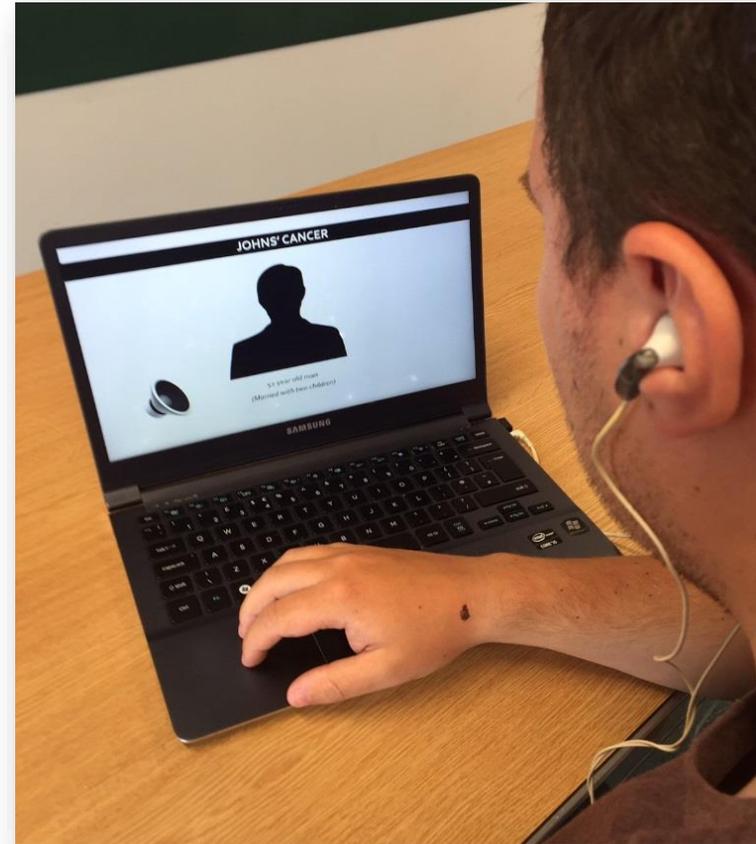
Gain a deep understanding of medical students' experiences of simulating a 'cancer' diagnosis and how this affected their understanding of patienthood and attitudes towards patient care

# CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION

Interpretive phenomenology and Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment



# CANCER SIMULATION



# DATA CAPTURE



Over 24hrs  
4 audio-diary entries



After 24hrs,  
face-face interview



After 3 months,  
follow up audio-diary

# ANALYSIS

Phenomenological approach  
using Template Analysis



# RESULTS

- 173 mins of audio-diary data
- 193 mins of interview data

**‘Cancer’  
simulation:  
*opening up new  
experiences***

**Drawing upon  
past experiences**

**A transformative  
introduction to  
patienthood**

**Doctors in the  
making: seeing  
cancer patients in  
a new light**

# **‘Cancer’ simulation: opening up new experiences**

- Multisensory/emotional experience
- ‘A dirty mark’ / blemish
- Persistency and disruptive
- Co-emerged simulation with daily activities
- Reaction (or lack of) by others extended the experience

*“...I found myself worrying ever so slightly about it, even though I know that it’s not actually real...but there is something about when you look at it, just because of the nature of it, it does stand out and at times it did feel real....” [Mark, AD]*

# Drawing upon past experiences

- Triggered participants to draw upon life experiences
- Personal to them
- Interpersonal
- Professional

*“It brought back memories of my grandmother who had cancer, and as an undergraduate I would have taken her to the [Cancer] suite for chemo - so we got to know everybody in the place, and I would have been talking to young guys who had skin cancer. So it brought back all those memories of that sort of experience.”*

*[Thomas, Int]*

# A transformative introduction to patienthood

- Provoked reflections on what it might actually be like to have cancer
- Guilt and loss prominent emotions
- Conversely, a greater appreciation of life emerged

*you know it wasn't a pleasant feeling, just to wake up and remember, ... until I get this taken off, I'm going to have this every day. And it's kind of a daunting thought, that you wake up and your world is just, your world's still crumbling around you, until you get the melanoma removed, then your world might start to pick up"*

*[Kevin, AD]*

# Doctors in the making: *seeing cancer patients in a new light*

- Being medical students integral to experiences
- Triggered a critical reflection on their professional development to
  - consider cancer patients holistically
  - reflect how best to interact with patients
  - desire to express empathy to patients

***“it’ll help in my communication skills with patients; think about them holistically and how this is impacting all the different aspects of their life rather than just being a pathology.....appreciate how they need support in various areas and need the chance to talk about their concerns.”***

**[Amy, Int]**

# CONCLUSIONS

- Novel simulation-based learning activity
- Degree of realism, integrated into daily life, permits an embodied experience
- Afforded an introduction to some lived experiences of cancer
- Opened a variety experiences beyond the biological account of cancer
- Provoked attitudinal changes towards holistic patient care
- ‘Phenomenological learning’ potential to unlock new learning spaces?

**“Phenomenological approach to illness has tangible benefits. It could improve the patient-clinician relationship by being an antidote to the objectification so many patients complain of.”**

Havi Carel, ‘The art of living, Illness’

