Abstract
Many earlier studies have contributed to a general understanding of the symptoms and signs of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), yet very little is known about the transition from a healthy to a chronically sick individual. The scope of this study was to understand how people live with their chronic illness, using Grounded Theory. Twenty-two participants with COPD were interviewed. Findings revealed “the basic social process” of becoming sick with COPD: The significance of living with COPD; Stages of becoming a sick individual; Strategies for management of the process used by participants. The conclusion reached is that understanding the process of “becoming sick” from the person’s perspective assists nurses to develop personalized interventions with individuals suffering from COPD, focussing on the subject of care.

Keywords
Nursing, Community nursing, COPD patient, Public health, Chronic disease, Transition.