

Adjustment to Lung Cancer
PI: Angela Liegey Dougall, Ph.D.

The proposed study will examine a psychobehavioral model of the manifestation, determinants, and health outcomes of negative and positive responses to lung cancer (i.e., symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, PTSD, and posttraumatic growth, PTG). The specific aims of the project are (1) to characterize the co-occurrence of PTSD and PTG following a lung cancer diagnosis by examining prevalence rates and the interrelatedness of PTSD and PTG symptoms longitudinally within one month of diagnosis and then at six and twelve months later; (2) to identify chronic or stable burdens and resources of the patients, such as demographics, personality, and trauma and illness history, that modify the experience of lung cancer in determining PTSD and PTG; (3) to examine the components of the psychological pathways that are potential determinants of PTSD and PTG (i.e., perceived stress, cancer-related intrusions, and social support); and (4) to validate the negative and positive sequelae of PTSD and PTG by using symptoms of PTSD and PTG to predict changes in behavioral pathways and in mental and physical health outcomes (i.e., psychological well-being, disease outcomes). Participants will be at least 18 years of age and have diagnoses of primary lung cancer from all stages and types. In addition to information on symptoms of PTSD and PTG, measures of objective and subjective cancer experiences, chronic/stable burdens and resources, perceived stress, cancer-related intrusions, social support, health behaviors, and physical and mental health outcomes will be collected. At each half hour session, a packet of questionnaires will be described which the patients will take home, complete, and return in a self-addressed stamped envelope. Information regarding diagnosis, treatment, adherence, and prognosis will be collected from the medical charts. In sum, this research proposal examines the understudied psychological and behavioral pathways that can either deter or promote adjustment to lung cancer and then examines the resultant negative and positive mental and physical health outcomes.