**Findings**
Symptom interpretation prior to treatment start

**Bodily sensations**
"I wanted to buy some new jeans... then I noticed that the usual size didn’t fit me.”
(informant no. 10)

"Recently I have developed this tendency of putting off things and I have been wondering. What is happening to me?"
(informant no. 7)

"I developed a top-belly, well I am getting older and so are my friends, none of us are fit any more.”
(informant no. 11)

**From bodily sensation to symptom**
"I thought I had the flu or something, so I went to the doctor. Well, he put me on his couch... and then he went for a colleague.”
(informant no. 8)

"The thing with my stomach began at least 3 months ago. I discussed it with my daughter in law. ‘Do you think it is a hernia?’ We agreed that it might be something like that.”
(informant no. 13)

"I just noticed some kind of change – a vague discomfort or maybe some extra gas. I thought it might be menopause.”
(informant no. 10)

**Health seeking and treatment start**
"I have a tumor right here, you can feel it yourself. I immediately went to the doctor. I was convinced that it was serious.”
(informant no. 6)

"I went to him [the doctor] and said I strongly feel there is something in my stomach which shouldn’t be there. And fortunately he trusted me and sent me to the hospital... in a situation like this, it might be an advantage to be educated well – and in a certain position, too.”
(informant no. 7)

"I went to the doctor because I had developed a paralysed, which I discovered one morning after my shower and she examined me carefully. Then she told me that it might be something serious.”
(informant no. 4)

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As long as the bodily sensations could be understood within a daily life context, they were not interpreted as symptoms of a disease.

Initially symptoms were interpreted as signs of a harmless condition.

The General Practitioner acted as first contact and gate-keeper to specialist care.