Prior studies show that there exist no research focusing on the caring encounter, as well as that there exists no prior conceptual determination on the word encounter. The purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding for the caring encounter through a scientific view of healthcare. The most central research question is as follows: “What is a caring encounter?” The theoretical perspective of the study relies on that “The human being is fundamentally holy. Human dignity means accepting the human obligation of serving with love, of existing for the sake of others.”, as well as that “The basic motive of caring is the caritas motive” (Eriksson, 2002).

The approach in this humanistic caring science study is hermeneutical. The collected data covers a conceptual determination of the concept encounter based on Koort’s (1975) and Eriksson’s (1997) conceptual determination model. The data collection also includes an empirical study in the form of theme interviews with 8 participants. The analysis of the data was performed by using a latent context analyze method. The results were then compared against the theoretical perspective as well as other literature within caring science. The results of this study are formed by the caring encounter within thoughts, words and doings. The outcome of the conceptual determination proves that the etymologic and semantic analysis shows that encountering is an old concept, which today is used in the meaning to answer to someone and to act in a certain way.

The result of the empirical study shows that it is important that the first contact with the patient and his family is a positive experience and that the caritas motive is present during the caring encountering. It turns out that the caring encounter has its roots in the caritas motive and in a caritative attitude which in turn alleviate the suffering patient.