The purpose of this qualitative Caring Science study is to discover new knowledge of what it entails for an elderly person diagnosed with serious coronary heart disease to be faced with a life-affecting choice. The study’s theoretical perspective is based on the Caring Science developed at the Department of Caring Science, Åbo Akademi University. The study emanates from four fundamental ontological assumptions: Human beings are fundamentally the entity body, soul, and spirit; Human beings are fundamentally holy; Caring communion comprises the meaning of Caring; and The fundamental category of Caring is suffering.

The study’s research questions are as follows: 1. What does it entail for a vulnerable elderly person to him/herself make a difficult life-affecting choice as regards treatment for serious coronary heart disease?; and 2. What form does Caring communion take in such a situation? In order to achieve understanding, a review of literature has occurred and conversations with six elderly people and three carers have taken place. The study’s methodology and method emanate from Gadamer’s hermeneutics.

The study results are reflected against the study’s theoretical perspective and interpretive frame, comprised of Jaspers’ border theory as well as Eriksson’s thoughts, inspired by Schopenhauer, regarding inherent will. The study results show that an elderly person’s life-affecting choice as regards serious coronary heart disease does not need to be a choice. Via a functional external structure that makes it possible for an elderly person to be able to follow unconditional demands and inherent will through suffering, it is possible that such a choice can become a matter of course and a possibility.