**Table S1** Indicative quotations: postoperative pain

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| **Patient** | **Indicative quotations** |
| No. 6, female, aged 56 years | The symptom that bothered me the most after the operation was wound pain. Although I used the analgesic pump and received a painkiller, I still felt pain in my chest; thus, I did not experience cough. I did not have much of an appetite and could not sleep well because of pain. The pain is a major problem for me. |
| No. 16, female, aged 65 years | Maybe I cannot bear the pain; however sometimes, the pain is significantly severe. I experienced severe pain with the chest drainage tube. It was significantly painful to move around. One night, the nurse administered an injection to relieve the pain, and I had taken painkillers before. However, I did not experience any pain relief. On the third day after the operation, the doctor removed the chest drainage tube. The pain was relieved immediately, and I was able to move freely. I believe that the drainage tube should be taken as early as possible. |
| No. 22, male, aged 63 years | When I woke up after the operation, I felt a little pain, mainly chest wound pain, but the pain was not significantly severe. When the chest drainage tube was removed, I could move and walk more freely; however, there was no significant difference compared to the pain experienced previously. The pain usually started at 6 p.m. and was more evident at night. |
| No. 31, male, aged 68 years | As long as I did not move, the wound did not hurt significantly much. However, as long as I moved a little, or when I touched the wound, it hurt. Today is the third day after the operation. The symptoms of wound pain gradually alleviated after the operation. There was no significant difference in the pain experienced before and after the chest tube was removed. The chest tube caused limited movement; however, I was always scared to touch the tube. |
| No. 39, female, aged 52 years | I experienced pain in the chest incision. I did not feel much pain after the operation, as I had painkillers, or the analgesic pump, so I did not feel significant pain. However, 4 or 5 days later, I felt that when I was sleeping, when I turned to the side, the wound hurt. In the recent 2 days, after the doctor adjusted the dosage of the painkillers, the wound did not hurt; thus, pain was most evident on the fourth to the fifth day after the operation. |

**Table S2** Indicative quotations: Coughing

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| **Patient** | **Indicative quotations** |
| No. 1, male, aged 56 years | I have been experiencing an irritating cough. It mainly started in the last 2 days (5 or 6 days after surgery). It is more frequent during the daytime, and sometimes, I can cough up some sputum. In addition, there is some pain in the wound when coughing, but the pain is still tolerable. |
| No. 8, male, aged 66 years | I smoked for 20 years before the operation. Maybe long-term smoking has had an impact on my lungs. After the operation, I coughed more frequently and coughed up more phlegm. Especially at night, I coughed significantly frequently. Sometimes, the coughing stops, but as soon as I lie down, I start coughing again. Thus, it affected my sleep, and I could not sleep very well. |
| No. 13, male, aged 61 years | After my operation, I have been coughing all the time; however as the days pass by, the frequency of coughing was decreasing, and the severity was gradually alleviating, especially the expectoration. |
| No. 19, female, aged 56 years | I had been coughing after the operation, but the most severe cough was on the fourth or fifth day after the operation. My body temperature also gradually increased at the same time. The nurse told me that my highest temperature was 38.5℃. The doctor told me that I had lung infection and increased white blood cell count; thus, he changed my antibiotics. Then after a few days, my fever subsided. Today, the doctor reviewed my blood routine examination and told me that I could be discharged tomorrow. |
| No. 29, male, aged 49 years | From admission, surgery, to post-surgery, the main discomfort has been slight coughing.  I am also coughing now; however, it is just coughing, and I am not coughing up any sputum.  My left lung was operated; thus, why do I find it easier to sleep when I lie down on my left side? When lying on the right side, I coughed, and it was hard to fall asleep.  I do not cough at night. I experience coughing during the day, and it does not affect my resting time at night. |

**Table S3** Indicative quotations: Shortness of breath

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| **Patient** | **Indicative quotations** |
| No. 2, female, aged 57 years | Since the last two nights, I have been experiencing shortness of breath. At night, I needed to raise the head of the bed up, so that my upper body is raised and the symptom is relieved, helping me fall asleep. I am worried if it is going to get worse. |
| No. 13, male, aged 61 years | An evident discomfort is the shortness of breath. You see, my ward bed is significantly close to the bathroom; however, I still felt tired and short of breath when I walked to the bathroom. Even sitting here talking with you, I am still feeling shortness of breath. After all, the operation resected part of my lungs; thus, I can understand why I have this feeling. |
| No. 18, female, aged 55 years | In the evening after the operation, I felt shortness of breath every now and then for a while. After a while, I felt like I am experiencing coughing. When the cough was accompanied with sputum, shortness of breath would be relieved. However, when I fell asleep, I would feel an increase in shortness of breath, and I would cough up phlegm again. As long as I cough up the phlegm, shortness of breath would be relieved. |
| No. 26, male, aged 62 years | For me, the significant effects on postoperative recovery are pain and shortness of breath. When I came back from the operation, if the severity of shortness of breath was 100%, now (the sixth day after the operation), it has reduced to 40%, which has had a significant impact. |
| No. 34, male, aged 63 years | When I was able to get out of bed after the operation, I started experiencing shortness of breath. Now (on the fourth day after surgery), I am relatively better than before. If I walk slowly, I still experience shortness of breath, and I need to rest for a while to relieve it. The impact of shortness of breath was relatively significant. My pace of walking has been significantly slower due to shortness of breath compared with my pace before the operation. |

**Table S4** Indicative quotations: Disturbed sleep

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| **Patient** | **Indicative quotations** |
| No. 3, male, aged 75 years | If I woke up due to pain or cough before three or four o’clock, I would still go to sleep. If I woke up after three or four o’clock, it would not be easy for me to fall asleep. Sometimes, I wanted to sleep during the time the intravenous fluids were being administered; however, I avoided doing that, just in case I break the needle while I am asleep. I also avoided sleeping during the day, and when I have nothing to do, I go out for a walk. |
| No. 14, male, aged 62 years | I sleep better now than when I just underwent operation, but not as well as before. After I was diagnosed with the disease, I could fell asleep quickly. However now, I have to wait until rest time and close my eyes for a long time until I can slowly fall asleep. |
| No. 20, male, aged 54 years | The uncomfortable part for me, I guess, is insomnia. Insomnia was not a problem for me until the surgery. Before the operation, I went to bed at ten o’clock every night. I could fell asleep in one second and woke up naturally in the next morning when I had sufficient sleep.  However, now I cannot sleep every night. I cannot sleep all the time. I do not know if it has anything to do with anesthesia during operation.  I had to adjust slowly when I got home from the hospital. |
| No. 25, male, aged 56 years | Since the operation, I have been in so much pain that I have been unable to sleep. The doctor prescribed some painkillers, because I could not sleep at all. Now, I sleep approximately 3 or 4 hours every night. |
| No. 33, female, aged 51 years | I slept better in the hospital after the operation than I slept previously at home. Now, I am able to fall asleep whenever I want, unlike other wardmates who said that they were experiencing a lot of pressure after the operation and were worried about their disease. On the contrary, I felt more relaxed and had no psychological burden at all after surgery, because I thought my disease has been completely treated during the operation. |

**Table S5** Indicative quotations: Interference of walking

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| **Patient** | **Indicative quotations** |
| No. 4, female, aged 54 years | The first time I got out of bed was the first day after surgery; however, I just stood beside the bed for a while and did not walk, as I experienced inconvenience due to the chest drainage tube. Today is my first time to walk out of the ward, because the doctor has removed the drainage tube, and it is significantly easier to walk without the tube. I walked around the nurse station approximately three or four times, and I did not feel tired at all. |
| No. 27, female, aged 76 years | The food cooked in the hospital canteen was not good; thus, I wanted to go outside the hospital to find something to eat. My daughter walked slowly with me because my wound was still painful. When we walked back from the outside, I did not feel tired or anything special, except that I experienced shortness of breath for a little while. |
| No. 30, male, aged 57 years | After the operation, I can only lie in bed all the time; however recently, I have been able to walk around. I can walk around the ward twice at the beginning; however, now, I can walk around seven or eight times. I am getting better as the days pass by. |
| No. 36, male, aged 66 years | As the thoracic drainage tube was not removed until today (eight day after operation), I only walked around the hospital bed after the operation. The doctor told me that I had some pulmonary leakage after the operation; thus, the time of tube retention was longer than other patients. |
| No. 37, male, aged 47 years | After removing the chest drainage tube, walking was more convenient and free of any restrictions. Even if I go out and walk a few more circles, it does not matter anymore. I am getting better and better every day. Now, I feel that I already recovered more than 95%. |