## Acknowledgments

This dissertation was conducted at the Department of Health Psychology at the Freie Universität Berlin. I was financially supported by a pre-doctoral stipend from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), and conducted this research as part of the DFG-sponsored graduate program *Psychiatry and Psychology of Aging* (GK429/1-98), which is a joint initiative of the Freie Universität and the Max Planck Institute for Human Development. I am very grateful for the opportunities that this program provided, and would like to thank the program's Steering Committee for sharing with us their immense expertise, and for providing a most stimulating research environment.

I would like to express my special gratitude to my advisor Prof. Ralf Schwarzer, who so generously offered me a place in his department and whose scientific advice and continued faith in this research was most valuable to me.

My very special thanks go to Nina Knoll, who was my co-investigator in this project (and who came up with the idea of studying cataract patients in first place!). Her enthusiasm and faith kept us going and opened many doors, and her patience, friendship and support are very precious to me. Also, I would like to thank Nina Ebeling, Urte Scholz, and Orla Hornung for their great support in collecting and managing the data, I so much appreciated their enthusiasm and optimism. Many special thanks to Bärbel Günther who was a great help in this project in many ways. This research would not have been possible without the participation of the patients, who I would like to acknowledge here. Also, the staff of the Schlosspark Klinik in Berlin and the Augenklinik Bellevue in Kiel were most helpful to us.

I would like to very much thank my dissertation committee for devoting their time. I am very indebted to Prof. Frieder Lang, who was so helpful when I first came to Berlin and who generously shared his great expertise with me, and to Prof. Alexandra Freund, for very valuable discussions and her continued interest in this project.

My very dear friend Gesa Gaedeke has been very important to me, and I would like to thank her for always being there, for sharing great thoughts and dreams, and for reminding me to take care.

Most of all, I would like to thank my family. I am deeply grateful to my father, for his love, unconditional support, his faith in me, and for being a great role model in so many ways. And to Micha, who gave me immense emotional and scientific support, for his patience and continued faith, his understanding, and his love.