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Perceived social support and self-care in hospitalized heart failure patients

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Statement of Problem: Self-care is recommended in heart failure (HF) management and to reduce hospitalizations, yet only one study has demonstrated improved patient outcomes with adequate self-care. This study evaluated perceived social support and self-care in hospitalized HF patients compared with community dwelling HF patients.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: The medical outcomes study of social support (MOS-SS) and the self-care of heart failure index (SCHFI) were the key measurement instruments for this multisite descriptive study. Multiple regression and two-sample t tests for unequal variances were used to analyze the data from a convenience sample of 121 hospitalized HF patients and a comparative study of 211 community-dwelling HF patients. Theoretical frameworks were the self-care of HF theory and the stress-buffering model of the social support theory.

Findings: Hospitalized HF patients had significantly lower self-care maintenance scores and perceived social support than community-dwelling HF patients. Perceived social support was associated only with self-care confidence, and self-care confidence was associated with self-care maintenance and self-care management. 25% of hospitalized study candidates had cognitive impairment compared with less than 6% of community-dwelling patients.

Conclusion & Significance: Community-dwelling HF patients had better self-care skills than hospitalized HF patients. Additional research is needed to determine the best strategies for improving self-care or reasonable substitutes in these patients. Additional research is also needed to evaluate cognitive impairment across the spectrum of HF patients, as this impairs self-care success.

Biography

Lyne Chamberlain was a Clinical Nurse Specialist with expertise in chronic heart failure patients and a passion for facilitating self-care when this study was conceived. She has presented at numerous national conventions for the American Association of Heart Failure Nurses and the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. She has also published several articles related to heart failure self-care. Currently, she is the Program Manager and a Professor of Nursing at Central Florida's Seminole State College's Bachelors Program.