Implementing a Heart Failure Patient Educational Program to Improve Self-Care

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Introduction & Background

• Self-care is critical for successful heart failure (HF) management, but patients often struggle to recognize, interpret, and respond to symptoms
• Suboptimal HF management leads to: ↑ cost & preventable readmissions and ↓ clinical outcomes & quality of life
• The literature supports nurse-led inpatient education, self-recording tools, teach-back, & role playing

Purpose & Aims

Purpose: to increase patient engagement in self-care practices with the following aims:
1.) Evaluate patient-reported self-care before and after the educational intervention using the Self-Care of Heart Failure Index (SCHFI) survey
2.) Examine patient engagement in daily weighing and symptom monitoring using a tracking log, as well as medical visit follow-up post-hospital discharge

Methods

Design: pretest, posttest pilot study
Setting: inpatient cardiac unit and outpatient HF clinic
Inclusion Criteria: 18 yo +, f/u at outpatient HF clinic, English-speaking, able to stand for daily weights
Exclusion Criteria: significant cognitive impairment, hearing or visual impairment, residence in nursing care facility, history of or consideration for a heart transplant or LVAD

Intervention:
• Nurse-led HF education session (daily weights, HF symptoms, symptom interpretation, follow-up)
• Toolkit for weight & symptom tracking

Data collection:
• Pre/post SCHFI scores at enrollment, hospital discharge, & outpatient follow-up
• Log audits
• Outpatient appointment attendance rate

Results

Aim One:
• Statistically significant increase in self-care scores from enrollment to discharge (maintenance 45.10.6, p < 0.005; symptom perception 6.5 (11.4), p < 0.030; management 12.1 (18.9), p < 0.037). There was no significant change in confidence.

Aim Two:
• Majority of toolkits were 100% complete

Conclusions

Interactive toolkits are a feasible approach to promote self-care
• Significant increase in patient-perceived self-care maintenance, management, & symptom monitoring scores
• High staff & patient participation
• Supports skill-building and emphasizes early response to symptoms which could have important implications for improving HF outcomes
• Results support continued expansion of project aims