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Social and psychological issues in heart failure

Sonika Bakshi
Chitkara University, India

Introduction: The social and psychological impact of heart failure has not been explored in detail till very recent past. Along with pharmacological interventions and life style modifications, psychosocial variables also need to be taken into consideration in order to have better clinical outcomes.

Methods: A review of studies, done in the last five years, that have examined the effects of social and psychological factors such as depression, anxiety, quality and level of social support in heart failure patients, has been taken into consideration along with structured interviews with various stakeholders.

Results: Extant published literature and the findings of the paper posit that;

1. Psychosocial issues have significant bearing on treatment adherence, which in turn affects hospital readmission

rates and overall cost of treatment.

2. The patients with heart failure do experience moderate levels of depression which further causes increased morbidity.

3. The Coping styles utilized to deal with the disease and the quality of social support are also important prognostic factors.

Conclusion: Though at this juncture, because of paucity of studies in this area, any definitive conclusions cannot be drawn. The outcome of this research will contribute to a realistic understanding of role that psycho-social factors are playing in heart failure patients as well as their inter-relatedness which will further contribute immensely to a holistic approach for heart failure patients.

michael.retsky@gmail.com