

PREDICTORS OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN MIDDLE-AGED ADULTS WITH HEART FAILURE

Barbara Michelle Ritchey BSN, RN

Cheryl Zambroski, PhD, RN

Donna Mitchell, MSN, RN

Georgeanna Wilson-Grant BSN, RN

Craig Ziegler, MS

University of Louisville School of Nursing

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Background: Heart failure affects an estimated 5 million people living in the United States. Despite improvements in pharmacological and cardiovascular interventions, heart failure still is associated with a wide variety of psychological and physical symptoms that impact quality of life such as anxiety, depression, fatigue, and dyspnea. While heart failure is the most common diagnosis in hospitalized patients age 65 and over, it is imperative to acknowledge the large group of adults with heart failure who are less than 65 years of age since 80% of men and 70% of women will die within 8 years of diagnosis. While much of research has focused on the older population of heart failure patients, nurses need to be aware of variables impacting quality of life in adults of middle age as well.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine predictors of quality of life in a small sample of middle-aged adults diagnosed with heart failure.

Method: This descriptive, cross-sectional study used a convenience sample of 46 heart failure patients (mean age 52.8 ? 6.2) who attended a specialty heart failure clinic in an urban setting. Participants were predominantly male (67.4%), married (65.2%) and Caucasian (87%). Mean NYHA Classification was 3.0 ? 6.5. Data were collected by an advanced practice nurse in the clinic setting. Instruments included a demographic questionnaire, the McGill Quality of Life Questionnaire, Memorial Symptom Assessment Scale-Heart Failure, the Revised-Piper Fatigue Scale, the Perceived Control Scale, the Palliative Performance Scale, and the Brief Symptom Inventory.

Findings: Data analysis is ongoing. Preliminary results indicate that participants with greater depressive symptoms also experienced greater anxiety and hostility. Furthermore, regression analysis suggests that 55% of the variance in quality of life of middle-aged adults with heart failure is explained by more depressive symptoms, decreased functional status, and decreased perceived control.

Discussion: Identification of factors that predict diminished quality of life in adults with heart failure can help nurses to target interventions to meet those needs.