

***“I Can Fix That!” Self-Efficacy When Multiple Comorbid Conditions Challenge Heart Failure Self-Care: A Qualitative Meta-Analysis Study***

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**Purpose:** To explore the influence of self-efficacy in HF self-care among individuals with HF and a comorbid condition.

**Background:** Most heart failure (HF) patients report comorbid conditions. Self-care of HF requires medication and diet adherence, daily weight monitoring, and a thoughtful response to symptoms when they occur. Multiple comorbid conditions may lower self-efficacy in self-care and interfere with patients' abilities to manage their HF.

**Methods:** In this qualitative descriptive meta-analysis, transcripts from three mixed methods studies investigating HF self-care (n=99) were re-examined to yield themes about self-efficacy in self-care and explore the influence of comorbid conditions on HF self-care. The Charlson Comorbidity Index ( $\alpha=.89$ ) was used to identify comorbid conditions.

**Results:** The sample was 74% Caucasian, 66% male, mean age of 59.6 ( $\pm 15$ ) years; 53% were NYHA class III. Most (79%) reported at least 2 chronic conditions. Diabetes was the most commonly reported condition (34%); 16% reported osteoarthritis with functional limitations. Narrative accounts revealed that the most challenging skills were adherence to low salt diet, symptom monitoring, and differentiating symptoms of HF from other conditions. Self-efficacy emerged as an important variable that influenced self-care by shaping how individuals: 1) prioritized self-care of one chronic illness over another (“I can tell if my sugar is up... I can fix it... don't even have to stick myself”) and 2) integrated multiple self-care instructions, especially in the setting of perceived conflict between those instructions. Subjects who felt ill-prepared to carry out self-care lacked self-efficacy in HF self-care within the context of another condition. As a result of fragmented self-care instructions (“...diabetic nurse didn't mention salt”), individuals selected one set of self-care behaviors to engage in, most often those in which they felt most confident (“...there is always sugar...I guess could be salt too but I can tell you...the sugar is the important thing to watch”).

**Conclusion and Implications:** Individuals with multiple chronic conditions are vulnerable to poor self-care related to insufficient skill and poor self-efficacy. Coaching interventions that integrate self-care requirements, focus on improving self-efficacy and develop skill in self-care across multiple chronic conditions are needed.