

## Paper Session C1: The Continuum of Heart Failure

### *Home Care Nurses' Knowledge of Evidence-Based Education Principles for Heart Failure Management*

Colleen Delaney, PhD, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

**Purpose:** Heart Failure (HF) in older home health care patients is associated with serious and costly outcomes. Home care agencies are currently being challenged by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to improve health-related outcomes in patients with HF. The primary aim of this study was to evaluate home care nurses' knowledge of evidence-based education principles for heart failure (HF) management. Secondary aims were to identify home care nurses' HF-related educational needs, and to use study findings to develop a HF quality of care improvement model.

**Theoretical Framework:** Riegel and Dickson's (2008) situation-specific theory of heart failure self care guided the development of this study.

**Methods:** (Design, Sample, Setting, Measures, Analysis) A cross-sectional survey design was used. Home care nurses (n=94) were recruited from four home care agencies. A previously-published 20-item HF knowledge questionnaire was administered to participants, and an open-ended question determined participants' needs for further HF-related education. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the frequency of correct responses and tabulate the overall mean correct score. A series of analyses of variance were performed to determine group differences in nurses' total mean scores by educational level and years of practice.

**Results:** Home care nurses' scores demonstrated a 78.9 % knowledge level in overall HF education principles. Mean HF knowledge score was 15.78 (SD  $\pm$  1.69) out of a possible 20 points. Nurses scored lowest on knowledge related to asymptomatic hypotension (24.5% answered correctly), daily weight monitoring (26.6% answered correctly), and transient dizziness (30.9% answered correctly). No significant differences were found between nurses' scores and educational level or years of practice. Nurses requested further information in all HF topics addressed in the survey as well as psychosocial issues, research evidence, and more information from other health care providers. Survey results and nurses self-reported needs were used to develop a quality of care improvement model.

**Conclusion and Implications:** Findings from this study and the proposed quality of care improvement program can be used to focus HF educational programs for home care nurses. Further research in home care settings is needed to determine if HF educational programs for nurses would enhance and sustain nurses knowledge of HF education principles and improve agency and patient outcomes.