

## Paper Session C1: The Continuum of Heart Failure

### *Does Simply Providing a Weight Scale Improve Heart Failure Self-Monitoring?*

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**Purpose:** Self-monitoring of daily weight is one strategy for detecting change in heart failure (HF) status. The purpose of this study was to test the effect of a brief interactive educational intervention on weighing behavior and HF symptoms.

**Theoretical Framework:** The Theory of Heart Failure self-care informed this study.

**Methods:** HF patients were randomized to intervention (n=31) or usual care (n=32) and all received a weight scale and HF self-care booklet. Patients were instructed on weighing procedure. Intervention group patients received additional education regarding use of a daily symptom graph. The Self-Care of HF Index (SCHFI) was used to assess self-care maintenance and management behavior. Frequency of daily weighing behavior was assessed on a range of 1, never to 4, always at baseline, 1 and 3 months. The HF Somatic Perception Scale was used to assess symptom distress. Descriptive statistics and paired and independent t-tests were used to assess sample and group differences.

**Results:** The sample was 89% non-Hispanic white, 67% male, mean age 67.9 (SD 12.4) and functionally compromised (83% NYHA class III-IV). Report of monitoring weight either frequently or always increased from baseline to 3 months in both groups (usual care 45.7% to 77.8%; intervention 54.2% to 92%). SCHFI maintenance scores at 1 month were significantly different within groups and sustained at 3 months, but did not differ between groups ( $t = -.98, p = .33$ ). SCHFI management scores improved significantly in the intervention group at 1 month (paired  $t = -2.68, p = .01$ ). Mean symptom distress decreased similarly in both groups.

**Conclusions:** Weighing behavior improved in this sample after brief instruction on how to monitor daily weight regardless of group assignment. Providing weight scales may be instrumental in promoting health by improving self-care among HF patients. Evaluation of the intervention over longer time periods and with a larger sample is needed.