

Empowering Caretakers in the Care of Chronic Heart Failure Clients - A Community-based Heart Failure Early Discharge Support Program in the North District Hospital

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Introduction:

Although pharmacological treatments reduce the morbidity and mortality relation to chronic heart failure (CHF), the management remains poor. Most patients and caregivers have limited knowledge of both their condition and treatment, and are frequently non compliant or self adjust their often complicated medication regimes. A Community-based Heart Failure Early Discharge Support Program implemented in COST collaborated with the Medical Department has been launched in October, 2009 to address those issues.

Purpose:

To empower clients and caretakers regarding CHF self-management techniques to prevent relapse, CHF exacerbation and to prevent complications through early identification and interventions, and control of modifiable risk factors.

Methods:

Target candidates included both home and aged home clients aged ≥ 65 who fulfilled the selection criteria. Proactive case screening was conducted in 9 acute medical wards with support from geriatrician for early discharge of CHF clients. Case management approach with regular CNS/CGAT nurse visits, telephone follow-ups, and early clinic follow-up with timely geriatrician and cardiac specialist consultations were provided according to program care pathway. A comprehensive CHF care package including basic knowledge of CHF, disease staging, pharmacological treatments and side effects, life-style and diet modifications, and CHF symptoms recognition and self-monitoring techniques with visual aid features were educated to empower clients and caretakers in preventing relapse and exacerbation of CHF.

Results:

26 cases with mean age of 84.2 were recruited from October 2009 to January 2010. All subjects were frail elderly with multiple chronic conditions. The result showed 70% of those clients with advanced age could be managed in community setting with no hospital re-admission.

Conclusions:

A tailor-made educational methodology is feasible in empowering elderly clients and caretakers in community setting. The community-based heart failure early discharge support program paved a way for promoting effective patient empowerment among CHF patients and their caregivers.