

The Impact of a Nurse-supervised Heart Failure Clinic Program on Compliance and Functional Capacity of Patients with Chronic Heart Failure

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Background: Patients with heart failure (HF) suffer from significant disability due to limited functional capacity. Heart failure centers (HFC) in which management is supervised by dedicated specialized nurses has been proposed to improve compliance and functional capacity.

Objectives: To evaluate the change in compliance and functional capacity in patients with HF treated at the Heart Failure Center of Clalit Health Services in Jerusalem and Hadassah University Hospital.

Methods: HF patients followed at the HFC with at least 3 visits in the clinic filled out a detailed clinical assessment form.

Results: A total of 78 patients followed at the HFC during a mean period of 380±227 days were included in this study. Mean age was 73±11 and 53% were males. Treatment at the HFC resulted in a significant increase in all measures of compliance. The most remarkable increase was in adherence to a low-salt diet. 79% of the patient increased their adherence directly due to supervision in the HFC. Only 4% of the patients did not keep any low-salt diet after supervision as opposed to 40% before supervision (P<0.001). Adherence to an appropriate diet as recommended also increased significantly from 66% to 88% (P<0.05). There was a remarkable improvement in functional capacity during follow-up. The New York Heart Association (NYHA) class improved from a mean of 3.1±0.1 to 2.6±0.1 after treatment (P<0.0001). 60% of the patients reported that their functional capacity had increased due to supervision in the HFC. 60% of the patients reported that their well being and mood had improved as a result of the treatment in the HFC. 89% reported that supervision in the HFC had increased their sense of security and had improved their health.

Conclusions: Supervision by dedicated specialized nurses in a HFC increased compliance and improved functional capacity and well-being in patients with HF. This program seems to definitely improve perceived quality of life of patients with debilitating HF.