Improving quality of life for people with chronic heart failure
26 February 2018

Bekelman, an associate professor of medicine who practices at the Eastern Colorado Health Care System for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and his colleagues evaluated 314 patients, with half of them enrolled in a program that addressed those quality of life concerns.

The Collaborative Care to Alleviate Symptoms and Adjust to Illness intervention, also called CASA, offered 157 patients a nurse and social worker who collaborated with a primary care provider, cardiologist, and palliative care physician to address the patients' needs. The CASA trial is the first clinical trial of such a collaborative intervention in heart failure and it included patients receiving care from VA, academic and safety-net health systems in Colorado between August 2012 and April 2016. Patients enrolled in the study were evaluated for a one-year period. The typical CASA intervention was three to four months.

The CASA intervention significantly improved patients' depression and fatigue but did not result in significant changes in heart failure-specific health status, pain, shortness of breath, or number of hospitalizations. The number who died during the study was similar - 10 of the patients in the CASA intervention died, while 13 of those receiving the typical standard of care died.

The improvements in depression and fatigue are important results because they are both common, burdensome, and difficult to treat in heart failure, Bekelman said. Very few other studies have found treatments for these symptoms in patients with heart failure. Furthermore, the improvement in depression lasted the whole duration of the patient's 12-month study period, months after the CASA intervention ended.

Bekelman discussed several next steps in the research, including studying the intervention in a higher-risk or more ill population, and using health technology, such as videoconference, to extend the...
reach of the CASA intervention.


Provided by CU Anschutz Medical Campus


This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.