The Effects of Exercise Intervention on Readmission Rates for Patients with Congestive Heart Failure

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Background

- According to the CDC, about 5.7 million adults in the U.S. alone suffer from congestive heart failure (CHF).
- The amount of people being affected by CHF is increasing along with the financial costs related to treatment.
- Non-pharmacologic treatments for CHF, such as exercise, are underestimated and can play a key role in managing the condition.
- **PICO Question:** In adult patients with congestive heart failure, how does implementing exercise into treatment compared to not implementing exercise into treatment affect readmission rates?

Method

- Information was collected using a variety of research databases including CINAHL, Medline, National Guideline Clearinghouse, Pubmed, and Cochrane.
- **Search Terms:** Exercise, heart failure, congestive heart failure, heart failure therapy, physical activity, hospital readmission, and non-pharmacologic interventions.
- **Inclusion criteria:** Peer reviewed research articles with full text, no older than 5 years.

Synthesis of Literature

- Implementation of exercise as a treatment for patients with CHF decreases the risk for hospital readmission, reduces annual healthcare costs, and improves patient quality of life.
Analysis of the collected data shows that there is a greater benefit than risk for patients who use exercise as part of treatment for CHF. Therefore, this information can be used to promote change of current practice.

Plan for Implementation:

- Introduce idea to healthcare staff as a guideline for care for patients with CHF in scheduled meetings.
- Decide on exercise techniques that would be most beneficial for patients outside of healthcare setting.
- Provide direction and reinforcement for patients during hospital discharge to use established exercise techniques along with normal medicinal regimen.
- Evaluate effectiveness of exercise techniques for patients and adjust based on patient needs.

Results

- Patients diagnosed with congestive heart failure who exhibit higher levels of physical activity show a reduced risk for hospital readmission.
- Exercise improves a variety of hospital readmission risk factors such as increased capillarization, aerobic capacity, and vascular tone.
- Exercise is a safe, non-cost prohibitive, and effective treatment for CHF.