



Tablet Promotes Self-Care in Heart Failure Patients



A new tablet can help heart failure patients better manage their disease including drug dosages. The research was presented at EuroHeartCare 2017.

Patients with heart failure are typically prescribed diuretics for reducing fluid retention and congestion. Heart failure patients are also generally advised to monitor their weight since a dramatic drop in weight could indicate that the diuretic dose is too high or a sudden gain could indicate fluid retention and thus a lower dose of the diuretic.

Lead author Maria Liljeroos, a nurse and deputy head of the coronary care unit, Mälarsjukhuset Hospital, Eskilstuna, Sweden, and a PhD student at Linköping University, Sweden highlights the importance of self-care and patient education.

A county council in Sweden established heart failure clinics in primary care. They tested an e-health tool called OPTILOGG that would enable patient to self-manage their condition. OPTILOGG is a pre-programmed tablet that is attached to a weighing scale and provides heart failure education. It also registers body weight and symptoms and titrates diuretics. If condition is deteriorating, the tool will detect it and will instruct the patient to increase the dosage. In case of weight gain above a pre-determined range, patients are instructed to contact a heart failure clinic. The tablet is extremely easy to use, does not require any pushing of buttons and takes less than 30 seconds a day.

During this study, the researchers evaluated the effectiveness of OPTILOGG in primary care. There were three primary aims of the study: to assess patient adherence to using the tool; to explore nurses' experiences of the implementation; and to evaluate its effects on self-care behaviours. Adherence was measured through automatic data retrieval after four months. Nurses were interviewed also at four months. Data on self-behaviour was collected using the European Heart Failure Self-Care Behaviour Scale (EHFScB-9) both at baseline and at four months. Self-care behaviour was rated on a scale of 0-5. 32 patients, 65 years old on average were included in the study.

Findings showed that 94% of participants used OPTILOGG as intended. The nurses did not feel that their workload had increased with its implementation. The median score on self-care behaviour scale decreased from 28.5 at baseline to 18 at the end of four months.

Ms Liljeroos said: "Patients' self-care behaviours improved by 10.5 points or 37% when they used OPTILOGG. The nurses said patients felt safer and were more committed to taking better care of themselves when using

the tool. We also found that it did not create more work for nurses."

Overall, study findings show that OPTILOGG is a useful tool and has the potential to help patients with heart failure manage their condition. The tablet is available at all specialised and primary care heart failure clinics in the country council.

Source: [European Society of Cardiology](#)

Image Credit: Pixabay

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