Abstract: Patient experiences of living with heart failure and diabetes

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Backgrounds: The presence of multi-morbidity makes self management even more complex for those with heart failure (HF). Although diabetes is a common co-morbidity in the HF population, the experiences of living with both HF and diabetes and the impact of such multiple morbidities on patients’ daily self-management are not well researched.

Purpose: This study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of patients’ experiences of living with both HF and diabetes and to identify any potential gaps in the current practice that could be improved.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews (n=14) were conducted focusing on patients’ perspectives of their current self management of their multiple conditions and the challenges they faced while living with these conditions. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, then the data were analysed using framework analysis approach by two researchers.

Results: Four main themes emerged from the data: 1) Impact: these multiple morbidities had a major impact on patients’ lives including changing their health behaviour, causing physical discomfort due to the symptoms, feelings of ‘life changing’ with low mood and memory loss. 2) Self-management of multiple morbidities: in addition to HF and diabetes, patients also suffered from other health conditions and experienced difficulties in self management at home and expressed the needs for more support. 3) Quality of health services they received: patients experienced contradictions or repetition in the information received from different health care team members when visiting different clinics. 4) Ways to prevent future admissions: more close and frequent monitoring/contact are needed as this may help prevent readmissions.

Conclusions: Findings from this study highlighted the need for better integration and more closely monitoring for HF patients with diabetes to reduce admissions and improve their health outcomes.