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Health literacy, knowledge, treatment adhesion and self-care in heart failure in a middle income country

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Introduction: Studies show that the care of patients with heart failure (HF) in a multidisciplinary team contributes to improve knowledge, adherence and increased self-care practice. In addition, a few years of patient study and misunderstanding of common medical terms may interfere with their understanding of health concepts. Studies involving these themes are relevant to guide the practice of the multiprofessional team. Objective: To describe health literacy, knowledge on HF, adherence to treatment and self-care in patients linked to a recent implemented HF Management Program. Methods: Cross-sectional study with adult patients hospitalized for decompensated HF and who had follow-up with the multiprofessional team in a university public hospital in southern Brazil during the period from November 2017 to November 2018. To assess the level of literacy in health, the Short Assessment of Health Literacy scale was used, which evaluates the pronunciation and comprehension skills of common medical terms. It is composed of 18 questions and a score between 0 and 14 suggests inadequate health literacy. In order to assess the knowledge about HF, a questionnaire for knowledge of the disease was composed of 14 questions, which considers as appropriate 70% of assertions. Adherence to treatment was assessed with a questionnaire composed of 10 questions, in which a score of 18 points (70%) is considered adequate adherence. The skills for self-care were measured using the European Heart Failure Self-Care Behavior Scale, composed of 12 questions (lower scores indicate better self-care - maximum score 60 points). Results: 130 patients were evaluated, mean age of the participants was 64 ± 11 years. The health literacy questionnaire averaged 12 ± 4 hits; the knowledge about HF had a score of 69 ± 17; adherence to treatment had a score of 16 ± 4 and self-care of 32 ± 8. Conclusion: The results indicate that patients are unaware of common medical terms, knowledge about HF is close to adequate, and adherence to treatment. However, self-care behavior still lacks strategies for patients to achieve attitudes that impact clinical outcomes. Follow-up in a multidisciplinary team, especially after follow-up after hospital discharge, has benefits and should be implemented with a prospective evaluation of this behavior.