What is the role of heart failure nurses with post-diploma education in clinical practice? Results of a Swiss Survey

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Background Heart Failure (HF)

HF: Poor prognosis, high symptom burden, low quality of life
- 1-2%; 10% >70y\(^1\); 160,000 patients with HF in Switzerland\(^2\)
- 2.1y survival after HF diagnostic\(^2\); 14% mort. increase 2015 CH\(^3\)
- HF as major cause of hospitalisation >65 years old\(^1\)
- 9-12 symptoms, mainly dyspnoea & fatigue\(^4-5\)

European Society of Cardiology (ESC) recommends HF Nurses in HF care\(^6\)
- HF nurses play a central role in multidisciplinary HF care
- HF Association of the ESC provided a HF nurse curriculum

In Switzerland, post-diploma education for HF nurses exist
- Recommendations for HF nurses in HF care\(^7\)
- NDS Kardiologie, Bildungszentrum Bern\(^R\)
- CAS en soins de cardiologie, Heds FR\(^R\)

Little is known about the role of HF nurses in clinical practice

\(^1\)Conrad et al., 2018; \(^2\)Ponikowski et al., 2016; \(^3\)OBSAN, 2017; \(^4\)Bekelman et al., 2007; \(^5\)Schäfer-Keller et al, 2018; in progress, \(^6\)Riley et al., 2016; \(^7\)Buser et al., 2006; \(^R\)see reference list
Study aim

to describe the role of HF nurses in Switzerland
Method

Cross sectional design
Convenience sample of nurses registered
  • in “CAS en soins de cardiologie” or “IG-HIB” database

Variables and measurement
  • Application of relevant issues in HF care as defined by the ESC HF nurses curriculum (12-items, closed questions)
  • Assessment of essential knowledge, skills and professional behaviours needed in HF care from the HF nurse perspective (one open question)
  • Evaluation of the HF role in clinical practice from the HF nurse perspective (one open question)

Data collection
  • SurveyMonkey by e-mail, responses were anonymized

Ethical considerations
  • Voluntary participation, response considered as consent

Data analysis
  • Descriptive statistics; thematic analysis¹ (open questions)

¹Braun et al., 2006
Results 51 nurses (39.8% response rate; 32 G-CH and 19 F-CH)

Participants N=51 (88% women, 12% men)
- 25 Dipl. Pflegefachpersonen HF; 4 Dipl. FH; 2 med. PraxisassistentInnen
- 10 Bachelor HES; 6 Diplôme niveau II; 1 ES; 1 Diplôme état français
  - 19 NDS / NDK, 2 CCNAP; 4 other
  - 14 CAS en soins de cardiologie, 2 others
- Nurses with high experience in clinical and cardiology care
Settings with HF Nurses in German- & French-speaking CH
Patient education – use of materials

- G-CH: 39% plan 1 session; 61% plan 2-3 sessions
- F-CH: 43% plan no session, 21% plan 1 session; 29% plan 2-3 sessions; 7% plan 4-5 sessions
As a nurse, when I look after a patient with heart failure ... (12-items)

I evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic plan interventions

I use a multidisciplinary approach in therapeutic education

I use measurement scales to assess key barriers to self-care (e.g., cognitive function)

I evaluate and identify barriers to therapeutic patient education (e.g., comprehension, language, low self-...)

I develop an individual education plan

I take into account the choice of the patient during the therapeutic education (e.g., to stop / not to stop smoking)

I take into account the culture, beliefs and values of the patient during therapeutic education

I interpret and use simple diagnostic tests (e.g., ECG, vital signs, biomarkers) during clinical evaluation

I discuss with the patient his medication, the side effects and the importance of their interactions with other drug...

I explore with the patient his understanding of the cause of his symptoms

I use measurement scales to assess signs and symptoms (e.g., dyspnoea, fatigue) and their severity

I refer to the criteria of the ESC to define HF with the patient
Essential knowledge, skills and professional behaviours needed in HF care: HF nurse perspective

Knowledge
• HF specific knowledge & clinical experience in HF
• F-CH: Knowledge in therapeutic patient education

Skills
• Providing (individualized) patient education
• Building a therapeutic relationship
• Person centred-care

Professional behaviours
• Working independently and also in multi-professional teams
• G-CH: Professionalization; evaluation of patient education; leadership
Evaluation of the HF role in clinical practice: HF nurse perspective

What to retain

• Infrastructure (room, time)
• (Several) individualised consultations, face-to-face
• Education and prevention
• Discussing brochure of the Swiss Heart Foundation with patients
• Collaboration with cardiologists and other professions

What to change

• Role description, time (%), structure, organisation
• Reimbursement of patient education/counselling
• Clinical pathway for HF; coordination with medical follow-up
• Patient education across HF illness trajectory
• Supporting patient skills

„Die Pflege bei Patientenschulungen (…) hat zu hohe Erwartungen hat an die zu erreichenden Kompetenzen der Patienten. (…) [Alle Spezialisten] haben die Erwartung, dass der Patient (…) bestens Bescheid weiss.“

„Es würde mich sehr freuen wenn die HI Beratung mehr Akzeptanz erhalten würde. Die Wichtigkeit der Nachberatung erkannt würde.“

«Nous avons l’impression que l’éducation thérapeutique n’existe pas en soins aigus.»

«Consultation infirmière pour les patients IC est très importante. Elle apporte beaucoup aux patients et permet aux infirmières d’asseoir leur propre rôle en collaboration avec les autres thérapeutes.»

«Je crois qu’il est essentiel d’être et de se sentir reconnu dans notre rôle infirmier pour nous motiver à mettre en place un projet. Jusqu’à maintenant cela a toujours été un échec.»
Discussion & Conclusion

- To our knowledge, this is the first survey to describe the role of HF nurses in Switzerland
- The survey was based on the ESC HF nurse curriculum
- HF nurses in Swiss settings address relevant ESC recommended themes
- HF nurses are concerned about lack of infrastructure, role description, restraints of time jeopardizing patient education in HF care
- These results may be valuable for both, HF nurses with a role in HF care, those developing or enabling such a role in clinical practice, and for further optimizing post-diploma HF education in Switzerland
- Further research is needed
  - Representative sample
  - What differences exist between HF nurse roles in F-, G- CH?
  - How do HF nurses manage to keep up to date with state-of-the-art knowledge?
  - In what situations do HF nurses plan no sessions but 4 or 5; when do they develop in-house brochures?
  - What impact of HF nurses role on patient outcomes in HF care?


CAS en soins de cardiologie: http://www.heds-fr.ch/FR/formation-continue/cas/Pages/cardiologie.aspx

NDS Kardiologie: https://www.bzpflege.ch/weiterbildung/weiterbildungsangebote/pflege-beratung-gesundheitsfoerderung-praevention/kardiologie/beschreibung
Thank you for your attention

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