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Psychological Well-Being of Caregivers Influences the Quality of Life of Advanced Heart Failure Patients

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Caregivers of patients with chronic illness often experience psychosocial turmoil as their loved ones become increasingly incapacitated. However, there is a paucity of research that examines psychological well-being of caregivers and its impact on the quality of life (QOL) of patients with advanced heart failure (HF). We conducted this study to determine the levels of psychological well-being of caregivers and patients, describe perceived social support of patients, and identify patient and caregiver characteristics and psychological measures that predict QOL of patients. **METHODS:** Data were obtained from 103 patient-caregiver dyads. Psychological assessment included an evaluation of depression (Beck Depression Inventory), perceived control (Control Attitude Scale), and QOL (SF-12). In addition, patients also completed the Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Questionnaire to measure perceived social support. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic and psychological characteristics of the sample. Relationships between patient QOL, patient characteristics, and caregiver psychological well-being were assessed using univariate and multivariate analyses. **RESULTS:** Patients were 57.61 ± 12.05 years, predominantly Caucasian (76.7%) and male (67%). Caregivers were 59.47 ± 17.64 years, predominantly females (70.9%) and spouses of patients with advanced HF (80.6%). Patients reported minimal to moderate depression, moderate levels of perceived control over illness and moderately low QOL. Caregivers experienced minimal depression, but moderately compromised QOL and perceived control. Patients felt that they had high levels of support. Regression analysis demonstrated that patients' age, employment status, and perceived social support and caregivers' perceived control and QOL accounted for 68% of the variance in patients' QOL. **CONCLUSION:** This study suggests that patients' perceived social support and caregivers' psychological well-being influences patients' QOL in the setting of advanced HF. Health care workers must focus on supporting caregivers and providing them with strategies they need to support their loved ones with advanced HF.