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Congestive Heart Failure Patient Education

Abstract: The purpose of this MSA project was to provide patient education on congestive heart failure (CHF). I have no conflicts of interest to disclose. The patient population selected to receive this education were the participants in cardiac rehabilitation at Platte Valley Medical Center. While not all participants had CHF themselves, they all had risk factors for developing the disease including previous myocardial infarction, chronic hypertension, persistent atrial fibrillation, coronary artery disease, and diabetes.

The prevalence of CHF continues to rise in the United States especially in rural areas. Heart failure rates are 40% higher in rural communities when compared to the prevalence in urban cities. [1] Often, patients in these areas have limited access to healthcare and fewer opportunities to discuss their chronic conditions such as CHF. These patients also often lack a strong foundation of health literacy which leads to a certain level of disconnect between them and their provider. As the field of medicine continues to advance toward shared decision making, it is critical that patients are able to understand their conditions to the best of their ability.

Having to abide by Covid 19 social distancing regulations, an informational brochure was handed out to all patients during their orientation for cardiac rehabilitation from March, 2020 to January, 2022. These patients were then asked to complete a 6-question survey to quantify how their knowledge base changed. Out of the 68 surveys returned most individuals felt informational brochures were a helpful medium to give them additional information. More than half of the patients stated that they had a better understanding of the medications that they had been prescribed. About one third of patients reported that their definition of CHF changed after

reading their brochure. 60% of patients felt that they knew what heart failure was prior to reading their brochure.

Overall, this data suggests that important clinical knowledge is failing to reach the patients. It remains unclear as to whether or not this lack of transmission is secondary to time restraints, varying levels of health literacy, or simply being overlooked and that is something that can be further investigated as a future endeavor. In the meantime, quick informational material such as brochures can aid in bridging the gap in knowledge sharing between physicians and their patients.