

Experiences and management of fatigue in everyday life among adult patients living with heart failure: a systematic review of qualitative evidence

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Clinical problem

- Fatigue is one of the most common and distressing symptoms of heart failure
- Patients infrequently report fatigue unless they are asked
- No specific cure or effective interventions available
- Fatigue negatively impacts on patients' everyday life, prognosis and quality of life, therefore it is important that patients can manage, monitor and respond to changes in their fatigue status
- Developing of a patient pamphlet on heart failure and fatigue

Review objectives

The objective of this systematic review is to synthesize the best available evidence related to the lived experiences and management of fatigue in everyday life in adult patients with stable heart failure



Review questions

- How do patients with HF describe their experiences of fatigue?
- How do patients with HF perceive the impact of fatigue in everyday life?
- How do patients with HF manage fatigue and its consequences in everyday life?

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Results

From the five included studies, 108 findings were derived and subsequently aggregated into 24 categories, which were finally meta-synthesized into five syntheses

Syntheses

Experiences

1. A pervasive and unignorable bodily experience

An unpredictable, fluctuating bodily experience



Three typical types of fatigue:

- Lacking physical and mental energy
- Lacking physical strength
- Unforeseen drowsiness



May be connected to other symptoms or activities

The impact of fatigue in everyday life

2. Limited performance of daily living and social activities

- Fatigue impacts negatively on patients' ability to engage in daily living and recreational activities and it increases their dependency on help from others.
- The unpredictable nature of fatigue create uncertainty in making plans for activities in the future.
- Fatigue changes patients' social roles, it limits interactions with others and may lead to feelings of being isolated



The impact of fatigue in everyday life

3. Loss of self-esteem, identity and intellectual function

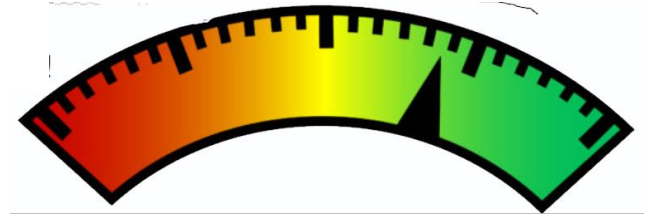
- Patients' self-esteem and identity are threatened due to feelings of uselessness, listlessness and failure of others to understand fatigue
- They live day to day with the strain of having a life-threatening disease
- Fatigue has a negative emotional and intellectual impact



Management of fatigue and its consequences

4. Using protecting and restoring strategies according to the body barometer

Patients read and act on the body as a barometer, and make use of protecting and restoring activities such as keeping the mind busy, resting, timing or refraining from activities



Management of fatigue and its consequences

5. A dynamic balance between accepting and struggling against fatigue

- Tailor ambitions and activities in daily life to the consequences of fatigue, giving priority to less demanding and enjoyable activities.
- Maintain physical capacity to be less dependent on others
Conscious of being physically active and balancing between dependency and independency using technical equipment and support from others.



Implications for practice

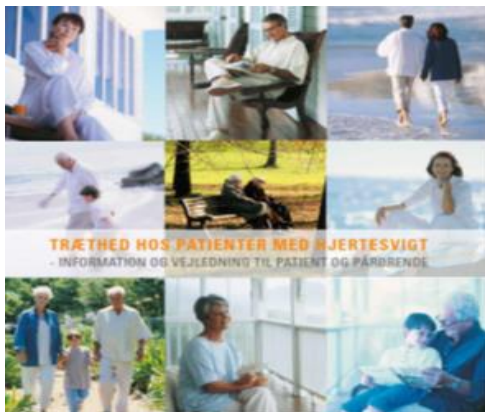
Identification of fatigue

- Subjective experience
- Systematic data collection and documentation
 - characteristics, frequency, variations and severity
 - relation to activities/other symptoms
 - impact on everyday life
- Exploring and monitoring the patients' experiences with bodily fatigue
 - what they do to prevent or relieve fatigue
 - support patients' self-monitoring
 - awareness and ability to read and react on their body as a barometer

Dialogue, information and guidance

- Dialogue with patients concerning their (loss of) self-esteem, identity and intellectual function related to the experience of fatigue to find ways to maintain dignity and identity
- Support patients to make space for fatigue and give priority to activities that are important to them and increases a sense of wellbeing
- Explore and act on patients' use of and access to support from others or assistive devices
- Information to patients and their relatives about patients' experiences, consequences and management of fatigue

Tak for opmærksomheden



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