

## **Self-care behaviour and illness perception in older adults with heart failure in outpatient care**

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### **Background**

Heart failure (HF) is a highly prevalent condition among older adults and associated with a high risk of mortality within one year. Self-care (SC) activities improve health outcomes and reduce hospitalisation and mortality rates in patients with HF.

### **Objective**

The study assesses the self-care behaviour in older adults with HF and its relationship to illness perception.

### **Methods**

The European Heart Failure Self-Care Behaviour Scale (EHFS CBS-9) and the Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire (B-IPQ) were used in this study. Pearson correlation and linear regression analyses were conducted to assess associations between variables.

### **Results**

In a sample of 105 older adults with HF (mean age  $74.03 \pm 7.75$ ; 61.0% women), the mean self-care score was  $58.10 \pm 20.20$  (minimum 13.89, maximum 100.00).

The highest scores were observed in the areas of taking medication as prescribed, following a low-salt diet, and consulting a doctor or nurse in the event of dyspnoea or swelling of the feet. A lower level of self-care behaviour was associated with a lower level of disease understanding, higher levels of negative emotions, and a stronger belief in the effectiveness of drug treatment. These factors explained 15.5% of the variability in self-care behaviour among older adults with HF ( $F = 3.38, p < 0.01$ ).

## **Conclusions**

Consistent monitoring of patients' self-care abilities and illness perception, along with targeted interventions to enhance understanding and reduce negative emotions, appears to be effective in improving self-care among older adults with HF.

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