

Congestive heart failure research paper examples

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Congestive heart Failure

Overview of the condition

Congestive heart failure develops when the heart cannot pump sufficient blood to the body. The pumping power of the heart becomes weak making the blood move via the blood vessels at a slow rate increasing the pressure in the heart. The heart may respond to weakening of blood vessels by becoming stiff and thickened. Heart failure therefore makes the body fail to get enough nutrients and oxygen to meet the demand. The kidney may respond to heart failure by retaining salts and water, and this fluid may build in the ankles, arms, legs feet, lungs or other body organs (Mayo, 2013).

There are two types of congestive heart failure. Diastolic heart failure occurs when the heart contraction is normal, but the ventricles are stiff and do not relax well to allow enough blood to enter the heart during normal filling of the heart. Systolic dysfunction occurs when heart muscles do not contract with enough force to pump enough oxygen rich blood throughout the body (Michael, 2012).

According to Med resource, Inc., (2012), the major lifestyle factors that contribute to increased risk of congestive heart failure are

- a) Lack of physical activity,
- b) Smoking,
- c) Diet high in cholesterol and saturated fats,
- D) Obesity

E) Alcohol abuse

Causes of Congestive heart failure

According to Mant e t al, (2011), the main causes of heart failure are the conditions that lead to a weakening of the muscles of the heart. These include

- A) Coronary arterial diseases. These diseases affect the supply of blood and oxygen to the heart tissue. The arteries become narrow starving the heart of nutrients and oxygen resulting in heart failure.
- b) Heart attack. Heart attack develops when a coronary artery is blocked, stopping or reducing the flow of blood into the heart muscle.
- c) Cardiomyopathy. The damage to the heart muscle due to infections, drug abuse and alcohol also causes congestive heart failure.
- d) Disease and Conditions that overwork heart muscles like high blood pressure, kidney diseases and thyroid diseases. Thyroid disease can also cause the release of excess thyroxin hormone that increases the workload of the heart causing heart failure. Heart failure can also develop when several diseases or conditions develop in the body at once.

Symptoms of congestive heart failure

Congestive heart failure may not show any symptoms for some time. The symptoms when they show up may be severe or mild and can be constant or irregular (Mayo, 2013). According to Mant et al (2013), the symptoms of Congestive heart failure include,

- a) Congestion in the lungs

Congestion in the lungs is a major symptom of heart failure. The retention of fluid in the lungs can cause some shortness of breath, and difficulty in

breathing when one is resting, wheezing or hacking coughs.

b) Fluid and water retention in the organs in the body causing swelling of legs, ankles and weight gain an increase in the frequency of urination at night.

c) Bloating of the stomach at night, nausea and loss of appetite are also consequences of fluid retention.

d) Dizziness, weakness and fatigue

e) Confusion and dizziness.

f) Heart palpitations and pulse rate that feels irregular and fast.

g) Breathlessness during physical activity

Heart failure symptoms can be aggravated by many factors including anemia, alcohol, excess and excess salt in diet. , diseases like diabetes, lung and kidney diseases can also aggravate the symptoms of congestive heart failure (Mediresource, Inc., 2012).

Statistics of heart failure diseases

Congestive heart failure affects 5 percent of people aged sixty to sixty nine years and, 2 percent of people aged forty to fifty nine years. In the United States, about 550, 000 new cases of congestive heart failure are diagnosed in the United States every year and about five million Americans suffer from congestive heart failure. The prevalence rate of congestive heart failure in people aged above sixty-five years of age is ten per a population of one thousand (Emory, 2013).

Congestive heart failure patients experience sudden death at a rate that is six to nine times more than that of the normal population. Deaths associated with heart failure in the United States are 287000 annually, and half of the

victims of congestive heart failure die within five years after diagnosis. Congestive heart failure is the most common diagnosis in hospitals for people aged above sixty-five years and accounts for 11 million physician visits every year. The prevalence of congestive heart failure is equal among women and men. African Americans are at a higher risk of developing heart failure than Caucasians (Emory, 2013).

Diagnosis of heart failure

In the diagnosis of heart failure, doctors question the victims on their medical history to establish underlying medical conditions that may be the cause of heart failure. Diagnostic tests are also carried out (Mayo, 2013). According to Michael, (2012), these tests used in diagnosis of congestive heart failure include,

- 1) Blood tests for the evaluation of kidney and thyroid function, anemia and cholesterol levels and blood glucose levels
- 2) B type Natriuretic peptide (BNP) test for testing BNP levels in the blood. BNP levels increase when there are symptoms of heart failure. The heart secretes BNP because of blood pressure changes.
- 3) Chest X-rays and Echo Cardiograms tests are also used to evaluate, heart function and structure and fluid retention in the heart.,
- 4) Ejectile fraction test for measuring how effective the heart pumps blood for every beat to determine if there is heart failure.
- 5) Cardiac catheterization tests are also used to ascertain whether coronary heart diseases are the cause of congestive heart diseases.

The treatment for congestive heart Disease

a) According to Mayo, (2013), The Medicines used in the treatment of heart failure include

I) Diuretics for removing excess fluid from the body

II) ACE inhibitors that open up blood vessels, reduce retention of water and sodium

III) Digitalis for opening of heart pump very effectively

IV) Vasodilators for opening of constricted blood vessels

V) Beta-blockers for slowing heart rate and reducing the heart workload

b) Treatment may also include addressing underlying condition that causes heart failure like the management of high blood pressure.

c) Severe heart failure can occur where the condition is unresponsive to treatments. At this stage, the doctor, the family, and the patient may discuss the option of comfort and palliative care for the patient.

d) Lifestyle changes like exercise, healthy diets, reduction of Alcohol and cessation of smoking.

e) Surgery may also be performed to correct leaking or damaged blood and heart valves

Coronary bypass surgery and heart transplants may also be performed.

Prognosis of congestive heart failure

Heart failure is a chronic ailment that can be controlled through lifestyle modifications and medications. Most of the symptoms of the disease can be managed by following the prescribed treatment plans allowing the patients to live normal lives, However, Most people die within five years after

diagnosis. The disease may worsen over time, and becoming unresponsive to treatment. The disease can be prevented by maintaining a healthy lifestyle through eating a healthy diet and engaging in physical exercises (Mant et al, 2011).

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