

Effect of Marital Quality on 8-Year Survival of Patients with Heart Failure

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ABSTRACT

Recent evidence suggests that psychosocial factors such as self-efficacy, psychological distress, perceived social support, and marital quality have prognostic significance for morbidity and mortality following heart failure (HF). Previously we reported that interview and observational measures of marital quality obtained from 189 HF patients (139 men and 50 women) and their spouses predicted all-cause patient mortality over the next 4 years, independent of baseline illness severity (New York Heart Association [NYHA] class). Here we present further follow-up results for this sample, with Cox regression analyses showing that a couple-level composite measure of marital quality continued to predict survival over an 8-year period ($p < .001$), especially when the patient was female, and did so substantially better than individual (patient-level) risk and protective factors such as psychological distress, hostility, neuroticism, self-efficacy, optimism, and breadth of perceived emotional support. Relationship factors may be especially relevant in managing a difficult chronic condition like HF, which makes stringent and complex demands on patients and their families.

Reference:

Rohrbaugh, M.J., Shoham, V., & Coyne, J.C. (2006). Effect of marital quality on 8-year survival following heart failure. [American Journal of Cardiology, 98, 1069-1072.](#)