

Anxiety symptoms worsen health outcomes in patients with heart failure when accompanied by depression. Symposium presentation, Fourth International Nursing Conference, Amman, Jordan. April, 2013

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Background. There are conflicting findings regarding the relationship of anxiety and depression symptoms with health outcomes among patients with heart failure (HF). The common approach to studying their association with health outcomes is based on examination of anxiety or depression alone and not together. To examine if this approach contributes to the conflicting findings, we examined the association of anxiety and depression symptoms separately and combined with event-free survival in HF patients.

Methods and Results. This was a one-year prospective study in which patients with chronic HF (N = 471) were followed. By using the Brief Symptom Inventory and the Beck Depression Inventory-II, patients were classified by the presence of anxiety and depression alone (i.e., with and without anxiety; with and without depression), and combined (i.e., with no anxiety or depression; with anxiety only; with depression only; and with anxiety and depression). Adjusted Cox regression analyses revealed that worse event-free survival was associated with 1) depression when anxiety and depression were not combined and 2) co-morbid anxiety and depression when both were taken into consideration.

Conclusions. Studying anxiety and depression symptoms in isolation of each other adds to the controversy regarding their effect on health outcomes among HF patients.