Expanding the Educational Walls: Providing LVAD Education to Community Care Providers

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Introduction
Surgical implanted left ventricular assist device (LVAD) is an increasing treatment option for patients living with end stage heart failure. Due to the increasing number of LVAD’s implanted, the mechanical circulatory support team questioned the best method to provide quality education to staff members from community based facilities who have had limited experience caring for this particular patient population. The team developed a free quarterly educational event entitled “The LVAD Basics: What you need to know LVAD Care in Community Based Medical Settings.”

Methods
A prospective controlled study using didactic and simulation education intervention was conducted. Participants were recruited from the educational event and completed a 15 question pre-and post-test evaluation. Each 3-hour program consisted of 1 hour didactic lecture, followed by rotation through 4 hand-on training stations. Educational content of stations included drive line dressing change, emergency care, and basic management of specific devices. Stations were instructed by acute care nurses and device specific representatives.

Results
A total of 102 individuals participated in the three hour educational sessions with a 38% (n=39) research participation over a one year period of time. In analyzing aggregate scores, participant response improved from 72.8% to 88.8% as a result of the educational session. Participant response significantly improved for eight out of twenty questions with participant scores increasing to 90-100% competency. When analyzing the question regarding quality of life, there was a statistically significant difference when a patient spoke and was present 0.0404 when compared to no patient presence.

Conclusions
In conclusion, simulation-based training for community care providers caring for patients with LVAD should be part of a comprehensive approach to ensuring quality care for this expanding patient population. With the ongoing development and expansion of LVADS and other medical technology, there will be additional need to expand the education regarding devices across the continuum from acute care through the community.