Breaking barriers to guideline-directed medical therapy (GDMT) optimization in heart failure: The roles of multidisciplinary care team

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Heart failure is a condition that develops when the heart does not pump enough blood for the body's needs. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, ischaemic heart disease was the leading cause of death in 2023. By 2024, it continued to rank among the top three causes of mortality in Malaysia despite becoming the second leading cause. Therefore, our main concern is to reduce the rate of mortality and readmission among heart failure patients in Malaysia by optimizing Guideline-Directed Medical Therapy (GDMT). However, its implementation in Malaysia remains suboptimal. **Materials and Methods:** The main objective of this review is to discuss the challenges in optimizing GDMT up-titration and exploring the roles of Multidisciplinary Team. The review was done with the following electronic databases: ResearchGate, PubMed, Wiley Online Library, JAPSC Clinical Key, AHA Journals and Scopus. Several search terms were used, including Guideline-Directed Medical Therapy (GDMT) and Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). Restriction was applied on the date of publication as all the sources were published from 2020 onwards. **Results:** In 2019, National Institute of Heart, Malaysia has successfully set up the Multidisciplinary Team for Heart Failure (MDT-HF) Clinic. However, there are several barriers to the effective up-titration which include patient-related issues, provider-related challenges and system-level limitations. Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve the delivery and titration of GDMT through multidisciplinary collaboration across the healthcare system. Through the last three decades of evidence, it has been known that the establishment of MDT-HF clinic can enhance the up-titration of GDMT by having multiple healthcare professionals managing heart failure patients. **Conclusion:** Optimizing heart failure management in Malaysia requires systematic improvements in the delivery of GDMT. MDT-HF Clinics provide a structured framework for timely GDMT initiation, up-titration, and holistic patient care. Addressing patient, provider, and system barriers through MDT collaboration is essential to reduce readmission, lower mortality, and enhance the long-term outcomes of heart failure patients nationwide.

Keywords: Guideline-Directed Medical Therapy, multidisciplinary team, heart failure