

Supporting Research @ The Vic

Research is a powerful example of what can be achieved through partnership. It touches all of our lives in one way or another today and offers us hope for tomorrow. Along with your generous support, Vic R&E is making new strides toward medical advances.

Please contact Susy Santos at (204) 477-3372 or ssantos3@vgh.mb.ca if you are interested in fund raising, becoming a donor or volunteering at the Victoria Institute of Clinical Research and Evaluation (Vic R&E).

Visit: <http://www.vgh.mb.ca/vicre> for more info.

VICTORIA
GENERAL
HOSPITAL



VIC
R & E

VICTORIA
INSTITUTE
OF CLINICAL
RESEARCH &
EVALUATION

VICTORIA
GENERAL
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION

[Http://www.vgh.mb.ca/vicre](http://www.vgh.mb.ca/vicre)

Winter 2010



We are the link that bridges policy, investigation, education and service delivery for the best possible clinical practice.

The Victoria Institute of Clinical Research and Evaluation (Vic R&E) is an experienced multi-disciplinary team committed to providing the highest quality of evidence-based research and evaluation, using ample initiatives to advance care into new domains.

Vic R&E's mission is to be a compassionate, creative and accountable unit while transforming healthcare. Our philosophy is one that seeks continually to improve and invigorate the services for our population. We are grateful to be able to enhance and further findings of new and valuable healthcare design. We look forward to continually respond to ever-changing varieties of research and evaluation needs as well as encourage further breakthroughs that change and enrich lives.



Become a Volunteer!
Participate in our ground-breaking and all-inclusive research and evaluation projects.

[More >>](#)



Donate Now!
Make a contribution to the cause dear to your heart.

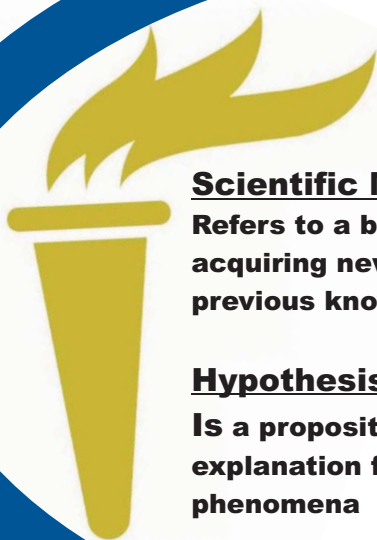
[More >>](#)



Contact Us!
If you have any funding opportunities for Vic R&E.

[More >>](#)

Definitions



Scientific Method

Refers to a body of techniques for investigating phenomena, acquiring new knowledge, or correcting and integrating previous knowledge.

Hypothesis

Is a proposition, or set of propositions, set forth as an explanation for the occurrence of some specified group of phenomena

Interested in Research? We can help!

We provide assistance to people who are interested in Research. We offer an accommodating and accessible environment to internal and external researchers alike.

We conduct all three types of research; academic, quality improvement and industry-sponsored.

Please direct your questions to
Janice Wong - jwong5@vgh.mb.ca

We are pleased to accommodate industry-sponsored clinical trials.

We now also outsource program evaluations; through comprehensive analysis and report dissemination.

Pain Management in Heart Failure

By: Harjeet Ghuman, MD - Research & Evaluation Associate

Introduction: What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure is a condition in which the heart is not able to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. It is a chronic illness that affects more than 350,000 people in Canada, primarily the elderly. Advancements in cardiovascular care and long life spans have increased the magnitude of the problem. In some cases the heart can't fill with enough blood and in others the heart can't pump blood to the rest of the body with enough force. As a result, there is an inadequate supply of oxygen and nutrients to organs and tissues. This lack of oxygen causes shortness of breath, fatigue and limited exertion, with half of those suffering from heart failure also complaining of pain. In the presence of pain symptoms, there is a gradual decline in heart function and worsening of the heart failure. Pain in patients with heart failure is one of the common causes of hospitalization.

Implication of Pain

Pain has a compounding effect on heart failure. It increases the workload of the heart and oxygen consumption by stimulating the already active sympathetic nervous system. A compromised heart may not be able to compensate for the increased oxygen demands, which could result in cardiovascular collapse. Pain results in a release of hormones that causes retention of sodium and fluid, further worsening the heart failure. Unrelieved pain has a major effect on all domains of the body and significantly affects quality of life. The possible causes of pain or altered pain perception have not been explored in people with heart failure. Pain could be due to fluid collection, impaired blood circulation in organs and tissues due to congestion, or because of low cardiac output.

Pain could also be associated with physical problems unrelated to heart failure. About 80 per cent of people with heart failure are elderly, and multiple sources of physical pain are common in older individuals. Perception of pain may also be altered by other symptoms associated with heart failure, such as shortness of breath, fatigue, depression, and anxiety.

Pain Management

Successful pain management aims to lessen pain, improve functioning, and enhance quality of life. Pain treatment needs to be individualized and in most cases needs a team of providers, as well as social support from family and friends. Both medications and complimentary therapies can be used. Pain medications can cause sodium and water retention which could be dangerous in people with high blood pressure and heart failure.

It is important to inform and educate the patient about pain and its management. There are many barriers to effective pain management that have been identified. Patients are often reluctant to report pain, as they may fear their condition is worsening, be worried about side effects, or not want to be a "bad" patient. Hence pain is often undertreated.

Currently there are no standard approaches to management of pain for advanced heart failure patients in hospice or other settings. Pain management is not addressed in current heart failure management guidelines. Since pain medications are usually unsafe in patients with heart failure, complimentary interventions could be adopted for pain relief. Psychosocial intervention is one of the possibilities that could be looked into for pain management in heart failure patients.