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Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)
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Introduction
- Results from the heart failing to pump blood appropriately and cannot meet oxygen requirements for the rest of the body.
- Affects almost six million Americans.
- Leading cause of hospitalizations for patients older than 65 years.
- Requires more hospitalization than any type of cancer.
- Affects roughly two percent of the American population, and continues to be the most rapidly growing cardiac disease in the country (Parish & Kadowitz, 2015).

The New York Heart Association (NYHA) and the American College of Cardiology (ACC/AHA) have provided classifications for the stages and levels of heart failure (See Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>NYHA Stage</th>
<th>ACC/AHA Stages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Participates in activity without limitation</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Stage A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Participates in activity with slight limitation</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Stage B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>Participates in activity with marked limitation</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Stage C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>Experience symptoms at rest, unable to take part in activity</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Stage D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Heart Failure Classifications

New York Heart Association (NYHA) American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association (ACC/AHA)

| Class 1 | Stage A | Patients at risk for heart failure who have not yet developed structural heart changes |
| Class 2 | Stage B | Patients with structural heart disease who have not yet developed symptoms of heart failure |
| Class 3 | Stage C | Patients who have developed clinical heart failure |
| Class 4 | Stage D | Patients with refractory heart failure requiring advanced intervention |

Implications for Nursing Care
- Multidisciplinary and multidimensional treatment
- Individualized plan of care, use of medication, diet changes, smoking cessation, pharmacologic therapy, weight loss, and behavior change.
- Main goal is to improve quality of life, increase longevity, and reduce morbidities and complications from heart failure.
- Treatment varies among non-pharmacologic methods or pharmacologic strategies, and may include the use of invasive therapies.

Pharmacologic therapy could include:
- angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACE) blockers
- β blockers
- α blockers
- aldosterone antagonists
- diuretics
- antiarrhythmics
- Other interventions could include:
- sodium and fluid restriction
- patient focused physical activity
- weight control

Use of invasive therapies include:
- pacemakers
- implanted-cardioverter-defibrillators
- coronary artery bypass grafts
- heart transplants

References