Introduction
When a patients HF becomes so extensive that the only viable option is an LVAD implantation it can be a drastic lifestyle change. For these advanced HF patients this decision can greatly impact their future. However, the purpose of the LVAD is not just about preserving life, but allowing the patient to portably manage their device and function with an improved QoL.

PICO Question
Population: Patients with advanced HF.
Intervention: LVAD.
Comparison: No LVAD.
Outcome: Improved QoL.
Question: Does the implantation of a LVAD vs. no LVAD improve QoL in patients with advanced HF?

Methods
A literature search was conducted using CINAHL, Google Scholar and PubMed databases.

Keywords: left ventricular assist device, quality of life, adults, and advanced heart failure

Inclusion Criteria: Articles that were published within the last 5 years.

Discussion
After conducting various literature searches, the articles presented above show that patients do have improved QoL after the implantation of a LVAD. Patients are able to better participate in their activities of daily living (ADLs), modify their self-concept, and feel a sense of “normalcy.”

Nurses in the HVIPCU, care for post-operative LVAD patients during the transitional phase before being discharge with their new device. During this phase, RNs work closely LVAD coordinators, patients, and family members to learn how to adapt to their new lifestyle change. Education such as: power source awareness, deciphering alarm sounds, performing daily system checks, and driveline dressing changes are the main focus points during this transitional time. RNs try to decrease the family’s anxiety during what can be such an overwhelming time by assessing the patient’s understanding of what’s to come and providing information for additional resources.

Conclusions
For the advanced HF patient, deciding to have an LVAD implanted may be one of the hardest decisions they have to make. Though it brings about new lifestyle changes, it can allow patients to get back to their baseline and discover a new “normal” for their day-to-day activities. As RNs, we should assess our patients for fears, concerns, and how they perceive the LVAD implantation. This in turn, can make for a better hospital experience for the patient.

References


Modica, M., Ferratini, M., Fabrizio, O., et al. (2014). Early on, after and LVAD implant, device recipients achieve and improved QoL, but emotional distress may remain high as time goes on.

Does the implantation of a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) improve quality of life (QoL) in patients with advanced heart failure (HF)?
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