Motivational interviewing to improve self-care in heart failure patients (MOTIVATE-HF): a randomized controlled trial

Ercole Vellone1*, Paola Rebora2, Davide Ausili2, Valentina Zeffiro1, Gianluca Pucciarelli1, Gabriele Caggianelli1, Stefano Masi3, Rosaria Alvaro1 and Barbara Riegel4

1Department of Biomedicine and Prevention, University of Rome Tor Vergata, Via Montpellier 1, 00133, Rome, Italy; 2Centre of Biostatistics for Clinical Epidemiology, Department of Medicine and Surgery, University of Milan-Bicocca, Monza, Italy; 3School of Counselling, University of Rome Tor Vergata, Rome, Italy; 4School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

Abstract

Aims Self-care, an essential component of heart failure (HF) treatment, is inadequate in most patients. We evaluated if motivational interviewing (MI) (i) improves patient self-care maintenance (primary endpoint; e.g. taking medications), self-care management (e.g. responding to symptoms) and self-care confidence (or self-efficacy) 3 months after enrolment; (ii) changes self-care over 1 year, and (iii) augments patient self-care if informal caregivers are involved.

Methods and results Parallel randomized controlled trial (1:1:1). A sample of 510 patients (median 74 years, 58% male) and caregivers (median 55 years, 75% female) was randomized to Arm 1 (MI only for patients), Arm 2 (MI for patients and caregivers), or Arm 3 (usual care). The intervention in Arms 1 and 2 consisted of one face-to-face MI session with three telephone contacts. Self-care was evaluated with the Self-Care of HF Index measuring self-care maintenance, management, and confidence. Scores on each scale range from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating better self-care; ≥70 is considered adequate. At 3 months, self-care maintenance improved 6.99, 7.42 and 2.58 points in Arms 1, 2, and 3, respectively (P = 0.028). Self-care maintenance was adequate in 18.4%, 19.4%, and 9.2% of patients in Arms 1, 2 and 3, respectively (P = 0.016). Over 1 year, self-care maintenance, management, and confidence scores in Arms 1 and 2 were significantly higher than in Arm 3 in several follow-ups. Over 1 year, Arm 2 had the best scores in self-care management.

Conclusions MI significantly improved self-care in HF patients. Including caregivers may potentiate the effect, especially in self-care management. ClinicalTrial.gov, identifier: NCT02894502.

Keywords Motivational interviewing; Self-care; Heart failure; Caregivers

Introduction

To improve heart failure (HF) outcomes (e.g. quality of life), it is essential that patients adopt self-care behaviours such as adhering to the medication, dietary, and physical activity regimen.1 Self-care of HF is defined as those behaviours that keep HF stable (self-care maintenance), facilitate symptom perception, and control signs and symptoms (self-care management).2 A metasynthesis of individual patient data demonstrated that HF self-care reduces mortality and hospitalization risk and improves quality of life.3

Despite the evidence supporting the benefits of HF self-care,4 patients find it difficult to perform self-care, and self-care is often insufficient.5–7 Investigators are struggling to find interventions that can effectively improve self-care. Recent trials of various interventions have had inconsistent results.8,9 Authors of a systematic review exploring the mechanisms by which HF self-care interventions are effective recommended that effective interventions need a supportive relationship with the healthcare provider, an individualized approach, efforts to promote self-efficacy, practical information on how to perform self-care, and support from others.

© 2020 The Authors. ESC Heart Failure published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of the European Society of Cardiology. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes.
Motivational interviewing (MI) is a goal-directed and client-centred counselling method\textsuperscript{11} that helps people to change their behaviours by exploring and resolving ambivalence (e.g. understanding the importance of exercising but not doing so). The key elements of MI are expressing empathy, developing discrepancy, avoiding arguments, supporting self-efficacy, maintaining a focus on the client to develop a shared plan.\textsuperscript{11} Several systematic reviews of trials have demonstrated that MI is effective for behaviour change.\textsuperscript{12,13} MI has also been used to improve HF self-care, but trials conducted to date\textsuperscript{14–16} have used small samples and had mixed results. Further, studies to date have not involved informal caregivers despite recent studies showing that caregivers have a key role in contributing to patient self-care.\textsuperscript{17,18} None of the MI studies collected data on self-care over 12 weeks and evaluated if including informal caregivers in the MI intervention could improve HF patient outcomes. Therefore, the aims of this trial were to (i) evaluate if MI performed with patients improves their self-care maintenance (primary endpoint), self-care management, and self-care confidence at 3 months; (ii) evaluate changes in self-care over time (3, 6, 9, and 12 months); and (iii) evaluate if an MI intervention that included informal caregivers improves HF patient self-care over and above MI performed solely with patients.

Methods

Trial design

We used a parallel randomized controlled trial with participants (patients and their caregivers) randomized to one of three arms: Arm 1, MI only for patients; Arm 2, MI for patients and caregivers; Arm 3, standard care. The complete protocol of this trial, entitled Motivational interviewing to improve self-care in heart failure patients (MOTIVATE-HF) has been published elsewhere.\textsuperscript{19}

Participants

Participants included HF patients with insufficient self-care and their caregivers. Patients were eligible if they (i) had a diagnosis of HF\textsuperscript{3} classified as New York Heart Association (NYHA) Class II–IV; (ii) had evidence of insufficient self-care determined with a score of 0, 1, or 2 on at least two items of the self-care maintenance or self-care management scales of the Self-Care of HF Index v.6.2 (SCHFI v.6.2)\textsuperscript{20,21}; and (iii) were willing to sign the informed consent form. We excluded patients who had a myocardial infarction during the last 3 months, had severe cognitive dysfunction with a score between 0 and 4 on the Six-item Screener,\textsuperscript{22} lived in a residential facility where self-care was not expected, or had an informal caregiver who was not willing to participate in the study. Informal caregivers were eligible if they were designated by the patients as the primary caregiver. In cases where either the patient or the caregiver was not willing to participate in the study, both were excluded from enrolment; however, after enrolment, if one person dropped out, the other person continued in the study. Participants were enrolled at three centres in the Lazio region of Italy: one hospital, one outpatient, and one community setting.

Intervention and control

The intervention was delivered by 18 registered nurses, six in each centre, who attended a 40 h training course on MI and HF evidence-based care. These 18 registered nurses were 13 female and eight male nurses, 11 with a bachelor degree in nursing and nine with a nursing diploma. The mean age of the nurses was 38.33 (SD, 10.4; ranges, 25–59) years. Their experience working in cardiology was 5.7 years (SD, 3.5; ranges, 1–13). Six had a master’s degree without a specialty in cardiology. The intervention consisted of a face-to-face MI intervention (about 60 min in length) followed by three telephone contacts (within 2 months from enrolment). During the MI session, the interventionists applied the principles of MI\textsuperscript{15} with the patient (Arm 1) or the patient and caregiver (Arm 2). Specifically, the interventionist (i) developed a supportive and empathic relationship; (ii) developed discrepancy between the current and the desirable evidence-based behaviours needed to keep HF stable and respond to symptoms; (iii) were respectful of patient/caregiver preferences and avoided arguing or confrontation; (iv) involved the patient/caregiver in problem solving; and (v) stimulated patient/caregiver self-care self-efficacy.\textsuperscript{11} During the telephone contacts included in the intervention, the interventionists used the same principles to further support HF evidence-based behaviour changes. In general, the interventionists continued to be emphatic with participants, especially with those expressing more difficulties in behaviour changes; complimented with participants even for small behaviour changes; and answered to questions related to HF and its treatment. These telephone contacts lasted on average 15 min. In Arm 2, MI and telephone contacts for patients and caregivers were performed separately. Patients and caregivers in the control group received standard care that consists of medical check-ups every 6–12 months depending on their HF condition and information given orally on HF and its treatment. The same standard care was also provided to patients and caregivers in Arms 1 and 2. All participants in the three arms received informational material focused on HF self-care.

ESC Heart Failure 2020; 7: 1309–1318
DOI: 10.1002/ehf2.12733
Motivational Interviewing improves HF self-care

Procedures
The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Rome Tor Vergata. Research assistants, who were all registered nurses trained in the study protocol, approached potential participants at each centre, explained the study aims, and asked for consent to participate in the study. Both members of the dyad had to agree to participate in the study. After patients and caregivers signed the consent form, the research assistants screened the patients with the SCHFI v.6.2 and the Six-item Screener according to the study protocol. Then, when participants were found to qualify, the battery of instruments was administered to both patients and caregivers. At baseline and follow-up, instruments were administered separately to patients and caregivers, and collaboration between them in completing the instruments was not allowed. Follow-up data collection was done by telephone at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months after enrolment. At baseline and all follow-up intervals, research assistants were blinded to the study arms, as were the investigators. Participants were not blinded to study arm.

Outcomes
The primary endpoint of the study was the score on the self-care maintenance scale of the SCHFI v.6.2, 3 months after enrolment. The SCHFI v.6.2 is a psychometrically sound self-report instrument that measures HF self-care with three separate scales: self-care maintenance, self-care management, and self-care confidence. Each scale produces a standardized score ranging from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating better self-care. The self-care management scale was completed only if the patient reported HF symptoms (e.g., dyspnoea) in the last month. On each scale, a score ≥70 indicates adequate self-care. Self-care management and self-care confidence were used as secondary outcomes. Both primary endpoint and secondary endpoint were measured at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months from enrolment to evaluate change over time. Primary and secondary endpoints were not modified after trial commencement.

Sample size
A total sample of 240 patients (80 per each arm) was estimated to achieve 83% power to detect an 8% difference in self-care maintenance of patients at 3 months with the MI intervention (Arms 1 and 2) vs. patients in usual care (Arm 3). In order to account for an estimated 50% attrition rate, we planned to recruit 480 patients. In considering the evaluation of MI on caregivers (Arm 2), group sample sizes of 80 and 80 were estimated to achieve 71% power to detect a difference of 8 points of self-care with a standard deviation of 20 and a significance level of 0.05 using a two-sided two-sample t-test.

Randomization
Randomization was done in a 1:1:1 ratio in the three arms of the study. To achieve a balance among the three arms, a block randomization scheme of 15 patient and caregiver dyads was generated with Microsoft Excel. These blocks were randomly placed into a list including 400 random assignments for each enrolling centre. Then, a research assistant prepared three containers, one for each centre, each of which included 400 envelopes. In each envelope, the research assistant placed one group assignment (i.e. Arm 1, Arm 2, or Arm 3). The three containers were given to another research assistant; the research assistant who prepared the containers was no longer involved in the study. Each time that a patient and caregiver dyad was enrolled, the second research assistant opened an envelope to identify the assignment arm. He then called the enrolling centre to inform the interventionist about which intervention to perform. If the dyad was assigned to Arm 3 (the control group), the research assistant did not call the interventionist. Blinding was successful because the first research assistant who prepared the envelopes for the centres did not know any dyads; the second research assistant was not able to influence the group assignment; the interventionists did not collect any data; and the research assistants who collected the data did not know the group assignment.

Treatment fidelity
Treatment fidelity of the intervention (Arms 1 and 2) was evaluated at two levels. At the first level, we evaluated MI with the Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity (MITI) Scale. The MITI is a behavioural coding system that evaluates the technical and relational components of MI using a score from 1 to 5, with a higher score indicating better MI quality. An ideal technical quality score is ≥3, and an ideal relational component score is ≥4. For this assessment, we evaluated 48 randomly selected audiotapes of Arm 1 and 97 audiotapes of Arm 2 (50 patient audiotapes and 47 caregiver audiotapes). The mean score for the technical component of all analysed MI interventions was 2.4 (SD, 0.5); the mean score of the relational component was 2.8 (SD, 0.8). At the second level, we checked if the three telephone calls had been done during the 2 month interval as planned. All the telephone calls had been done.

Statistical methods
Baseline characteristics were summarized by arm as medians and quartiles or as means and SDs for continuous data.
data and as absolute numbers and their frequencies for categorical data. The change in self-care scores during follow-up were reported as the difference/delta (Δ) of self-care score at each follow-up time (T1, T2, T3, and T4) minus the baseline self-care score (T0). The primary end-point was evaluated using a two-sample t-test comparing the delta of self-care score in Arms 1 and 2 with respect to the control Arm 3.

Changes over time (from baseline to T4) in self-care maintenance, management, and confidence were analysed with mixed models to account for drop-out and missing values including, as a response variable, the self-care maintenance, management, and confidence scores available from T0 to T4 for each patient in the study arm. The dependence between self-care maintenance, management, and confidence on the same subject was accounted for by the inclusion of a random

**Figure 1** Participant flow. ITT, intention to treat.
intercept in the models. The models included as regressors the visit number as a continuous variable, the randomization arm, the interaction between the arm, and visit number. The same models were also adjusted for patient age, sex, income, cohabitation with the caregiver, NYHA class, Charlson Comorbidity Index\textsuperscript{24} and the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA)\textsuperscript{25} scores, time since diagnosis, number of medications, and self-care confidence score at baseline to account for potential confounders. The percentage of patients with adequate self-care maintenance, management and confidence (scores $\geq 70$) were evaluated using $\chi^2$ test with one degree of freedom.

**Results**

**Participant flow**

Between June 2014 and October 2018, 1032 patients and caregiver dyads were assessed for eligibility. Of these, 522 dyads were excluded after assessment for the following reasons: $n = 271$ patient and caregiver dyads did meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria ($n = 48$ patients were in NYHA I; $n = 28$ patients did not have insufficient self-care; $n = 47$ patients had had a myocardial infarction during the preceding 3 months; $n = 5$ patients had severe cognitive impairment; $n = 97$ caregivers refused to participate although patients wanted to do so; $n = 46$ patients lived in residential settings); $n = 197$ patients declined to participate; $n = 54$ declined for other unknown reasons (Figure 1). All of the 510 enrolled and randomized HF patient and caregiver dyads were included in the intention-to-treat analyses (Figures 1). A total of 406 patients who completed T1 (3 months from enrolment) were used in the analysis of the primary endpoint. Attrition was 20.4% in patients and 37.2% in caregivers. Participants who completed the full 12 month trial included 238 HF patients and 235 caregivers (Figure 1).

**Participants’ characteristics**

Patients’ and caregivers’ baseline characteristics, separated by study arm, are shown in Table 1. Patients had a median age of 74 years, with a prevalence of men (58%). Most of them were retired (76.2%). Caregivers had a median age of 55 years and were mostly women (75.5%). Most patients were in NYHA Class II (61.9%) and had an ischemic HF aetiology (33.6%). At baseline, self-care scale scores were inadequate; the mean self-care maintenance, management, and confidence scale scores were 45.55, 39.73, and 51.42, respectively (Supporting information, Figures S2–S3). Few had adequate self-care scores (5%, 6.5%, and 20.5% in self-care maintenance, management, and confidence, respectively; Table 1). Patient and caregiver characteristics and patient self-care scores were not different among the three arms except for the variable ‘caregiver living with patient’. In Arm 2, a higher percentage of caregivers were living with the patients. When Arms 1 and 2 were combined, this difference faded.

**Self-care maintenance (primary endpoint), management, and confidence at T1**

At 3 months after enrolment (T1), the improvement in the self-care maintenance scores (primary endpoint) from baseline was higher in Arms 1 and 2 than in Arm 3 (Table 2).

Specifically, the improvement was 6.99 (95% CI, 3.3; 10.6), 7.42 (95% CI, 3.9; 10.9), and 2.58 points in Arms 1, 2, and 3, respectively ($P = 0.0282$; Table 2, Figure S1). Moreover, at T1, 18.4% and 19.4% of patients in Arms 1 and 2, respectively, had adequate self-care maintenance scores (score $\geq 70$), while in Arm 3, only 9.2% of patients had adequate self-care maintenance ($P = 0.0162$). At T1, also the self-care management scores improved significantly (Table 3 and Figure S2). Specifically, Arm 1 improved 12.33 points (95% CI, 7.7; 16.9), Arm 2 improved 15.25 points (95% CI, 10.9; 19.6), and Arm 3 improved only 7.72 points. The improvements in self-care maintenance and self-care management score can be considered clinically significant. No significant improvement was observed regarding self-care confidence scores at T1.

**Changes in self-care maintenance, management, and confidence over time**

Self-care maintenance, management, and confidence scale scores during follow-up are reported in Figures S1–S3. We generally found a higher improvement in self-care maintenance scale scores in Arms 1 and 2 with respect to Arm 3 (Table 2). Also, the percentage of patients with adequate self-care maintenance (scores $\geq 70$) was significantly higher in Arms 1 and 2 than Arm 3 at each follow-up time, with, on average, 10% more patients with adequate self-care maintenance at each follow-up interval (Table 2).

The improvement in self-care management scale scores in the three arms was significantly higher in Arms 1 and 2 than Arm 3 at T1 and T2 ($P = 0.028$ and $P = 0.0076$, respectively) but not at T3 and T4. An average of 10% more patients reported self-care management adequacy in Arms 1 and 2 with respect of Arm 3, but the difference was significant only at T2 (Table 3).

Regarding changes in self-care confidence scale scores, no significant differences were observed in the three arms at T1 and T4, however, at T2 and T3, patients in Arms 1 and 2 had better improvement in self-care confidence than patients in Arm 3 ($P = 0.037$ and 0.031, respectively). A similar pattern was observed in the number of patients who became
In this study, we demonstrated that MI was effective in improving not only self-care maintenance after 3 months from enrolment (primary endpoint) but also self-care management. Also, improvements in self-care maintenance, management,
and confidence were evident in the two active intervention groups over time. These findings are important because modifying self-care behaviours is not easy in HF, and a previous study found an improvement in self-care maintenance at 3 months only after adjusting for confounding variables. At T1, we observed a statistically significant improvement in self-care maintenance and management that was also clinically significant. In fact, the developers of the SCHFI v.6 defined half SD as a clinically significant improvement on the SCHFI v.6.26 scales. In our study, half SD was 7.6 points for self-care maintenance and 8.8 points for self-care management. Considering these values, we obtained a clinically significant effect for self-care maintenance, which improved on average 6.99 and 7.42 points in Arms 1 and 2, respectively, and a clinically significant effect for self-care management, which improved 12.33 and 15.2 points in Arms 1 and 2, respectively.

In this study, we evaluated the effect of MI over a 1 year interval. Unexpectedly, we observed a mixed and long-lasting effect of MI on self-care maintenance, management, and confidence. For example, MI had a significant effect on self-care maintenance at all follow-up intervals, a significant effect on self-care management at T2, and a significant effect at T2 and T3 on self-care confidence. These results were partially confirmed when we applied the mixed model analysis from baseline to T4 in which we controlled

### Table 2  Self-care maintenance changes and self-care maintenance adequacy during follow-up

| Variable                        | Arm 1: MI only for patients | Arm 2: MI for patients and caregivers | Arm 3: Standard of care | Difference (95% CI)a | P value |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Δ in Self-care maintenance scoresa | Mean (SD)                  | Mean (SD)                            | Mean (SD)                |                       |         |
| T1                              | 363                         | 6.99 (19.62)                          | 7.42 (20.17)             | 2.58 (18.26)         | 4.63 (0.5;8.76)    | 0.0282  |
| T2                              | 293                         | 9.6 (18.94)                           | 10.15 (22.25)            | 4.69 (21.73)         | 5.21 (–0.13;10.55) | 0.0558  |
| T3                              | 252                         | 13.84 (16.5)                          | 15.96 (16.92)            | 7.81 (20.96)         | 7.18 (1.88;12.49)  | 0.0083  |
| T4                              | 238                         | 21.19 (16.71)                         | 18.84 (20.74)            | 14.65 (18.89)        | 5.25 (0.05;10.45)  | 0.0480  |
| Patients adequate in self-care maintenance (score ≥70)b | N (%)                       | N (%)                                 | N (%)                    |                       |         |
| T1                              | 363                         | 21 (18.4)                             | 25 (19.4)                | 11 (9.2)             | 9.8 (2.6;16.9)    | 0.0162  |
| T2                              | 293                         | 20 (22)                               | 23 (20.7)                | 9 (9.9)              | 11.4 (3.1;19.7)   | 0.0181  |
| T3                              | 252                         | 15 (19)                               | 20 (21.3)                | 6 (7.6)              | 12.6 (4.3;21)     | 0.0117  |
| T4                              | 238                         | 24 (32.9)                             | 31 (34.8)                | 14 (18.4)            | 15.5 (4.2;26.9)   | 0.0138  |

CI, confidence interval; MI, motivational interviewing; SD, standard deviation.

aThe difference is between Arms 1 and Arm 2 vs. Arm 3.
bSelf-care maintenance scores. The columns for each arm report the delta (Δ) of the self-care maintenance score computed subtracting the self-care maintenance score at baseline from the self-care maintenance score at each follow-up time (T1, T2, T3, and T4).

### Table 3  Self-care management changes and self-care management adequacy during follow-up

| Variable                        | Arm 1: MI only for patients | Arm 2: MI for patients and caregivers | Arm 3: Standard of care | Difference (95% CI)a | P value |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Δ in Self-care management scoresa | Mean (SD)                  | Mean (SD)                            | Mean (SD)                |                       |         |
| T1                              | 152                         | 12.33 (15.29)                         | 15.25 (16.94)            | 7.72 (15.87)         | 6.29 (0.68;11.9) | 0.0284  |
| T2                              | 110                         | 13.53 (23.18)                         | 18.86 (24.13)            | 4.84 (18.69)         | 11.69 (3.21;20.18) | 0.0076  |
| T3                              | 90                          | 24.14 (23.11)                         | 21.91 (22.16)            | 14.44 (16.54)        | 8.49 (–0.01;16.99) | 0.0503  |
| T4                              | 89                          | 18.17 (19.59)                         | 26.72 (23.16)            | 15 (18.76)           | 7.58 (–1.52;16.69) | 0.1009  |
| Patients adequate in self-care management (scores ≥70)b | N (%)                       | N (%)                                 | N (%)                    |                       |         |
| T1                              | 176                         | 15 (29.4)                             | 16 (22.5)                | 8 (14.8)             | 10.6 (–1.6;22.8)  | 0.1186  |
| T2                              | 145                         | 13 (28.3)                             | 13 (23.6)                | 3 (6.8)              | 18.9 (7.6;30.2)   | 0.0088  |
| T3                              | 126                         | 17 (41.5)                             | 12 (26.7)                | 8 (20)               | 13.7 (–2.2;29.6)  | 0.1154  |
| T4                              | 113                         | 11 (29.7)                             | 12 (30.8)                | 6 (16.2)             | 14 (–1.7;29.8)    | 0.1086  |

CI, confidence interval; MI, motivational interviewing; SD, standard deviation.

aSelf-care management scores. The columns for each arm report the delta (Δ) of the self-care management score computed subtracting the self-care management score at baseline from the self-care management score at each follow-up time (T1, T2, T3, and T4).

bIn each column is reported the number and percentage of patients with adequate self-care management (scores ≥70) at each follow-up time (T1, T2, T3, and T4). Comparisons between Arm 1 and Arm 2 regarding self-care management scores and self-care management adequacy were not statistically significant.
for missing data and confounding variables. This analysis showed that, over 1 year, our intervention effectively improved patient self-care maintenance even if the caregiver in the same dyad did not receive the intervention (Arm 1). But, for self-care management, MI was only effective if it was also performed with caregivers (Arm 2). This finding reinforces our belief that HF self-care management is more complex than self-care maintenance and is facilitated by others. Prior studies that used MI to improve self-care in HF patients found only an improvement in self-care maintenance, management, and confidence at 12 and 8 weeks after enrolment. We demonstrated that MI can affect self-care up to 1 year from the enrolment.

Several potential sources of bias were identified in this study. First, at T1, the patient attrition was 20.4% and this roll to 46.7% at T4. Although high, our attrition rate at T1 was better than similar studies (33%). By T4, when attrition was highest, we compensated for drop-outs and confounders, using a mixed model analysis that confirmed the efficacy of MI on self-care maintenance and management in Arms 1 and 2, respectively. Another source of bias could be MI quality scores that were lower than desired for the technical and relational components. In spite of this, the MI intervention was effective. Had the intervention quality been better and the dose been higher, we anticipate that the improvement in self-care maintenance, management, and confidence would have been even better. Another potential limitation is that MI is a personalized, tailored approach that is difficult to standardize. Consistent with the method, our interventionists let the patients decide which self-care behaviour to address during the intervention (e.g. physical activity and diet). In spite of these limitations, as we recruited patients from different healthcare settings and our inclusion and exclusion criteria were not strict, the results of this study may have good external validity.

We believe that this study has important clinical implications. Because the MI approach was useful in improving self-care and self-care can improve patient outcomes, MI could become an inexpensive tool to improve HF patient outcomes. However, we discovered that MI is not easy to perform with adequate technical and relational skills. In the

---

**Table 4  Self-care confidence changes and self-care confidence adequacy during follow-up**

| Variable | Arm 1: MI only for patients | Arm 2: MI for patients and caregivers | Arm 3: Standard of care | Difference (95%CI) | P value |
|----------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Δ Self-care confidence scores* | n=363, 6.49 (21.59) | n=5.82 (24.11) | n=3.43 (19.98) | 2.7 (-1.91;7.32) | 0.2495 |
| T1       | 363 | 6.49 (21.59) | 5.82 (24.11) | 3.43 (19.98) | 2.7 (-1.91;7.32) | 0.2495 |
| T2       | 292 | 7.39 (23.58) | 6.62 (28.66) | 0.06 (25.93) | 6.91 (0.41;13.41) | 0.0374 |
| T3       | 251 | 17.45 (24.02) | 16.02 (22.92) | 9.85 (22.94) | 6.83 (0.63;13.02) | 0.031 |
| T4       | 237 | 17.67 (20.73) | 15.48 (27.28) | 12.51 (27.56) | 3.96 (-3.36;11.29) | 0.2865 |
| Patients adequate in self-care confidence (scores ≥ 70)** | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) |
| T1       | 364 | 34 (29.8) | 37 (28.5) | 27 (22.5) | 6.6 (-2.8;16) | 0.1821 |
| T2       | 293 | 23 (25.3) | 32 (28.8) | 13 (14.3) | 12.9 (3.5;22.4) | 0.0152 |
| T3       | 252 | 25 (31.6) | 34 (36.2) | 15 (19) | 15.1 (3.9;26.3) | 0.0145 |
| T4       | 238 | 31 (42.5) | 35 (39.3) | 23 (30.3) | 10.5 (-2.3;23.3) | 0.1194 |

CI, confidence interval; MI, motivational interviewing; SD, standard deviation.

*Δ Self-care confidence scores. The columns for each arm report the delta (Δ) of the self-care confidence score computed subtracting the self-care confidence score at baseline from the self-care confidence score at each follow-up time (T1, T2, T3, and T4).

**In each column is reported the number and percentage of patients with adequate self-care confidence (scores ≥70) at each follow-up time (T1, T2, T3, and T4). Comparisons between Arms 1 and 2 regarding self-care confidence scores and self-care confidence adequacy were not statistically significant.

---

**Figure 2  Model-based self-care maintenance (A), self-care management (B), and self-care confidence (C) scale scores by follow-up time.**

---

E. Vellone et al. ESC Heart Failure 2020; 7: 1309–1318 DOI: 10.1002/ehf2.12733
future, we recommend further studies in which interventionists performing MI are trained for longer periods and their MI skills are evaluated before they are allowed to perform the intervention.

In conclusion, we demonstrated that MI performed by a general population of trained nurses was effective in significantly improving self-care of adults with HF. Including caregivers may augment the effectiveness of an MI intervention in this population, especially in self-care management.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the support for this study given by the Italian Association of Heart Failure Patients (Associazione Italiana Scompensati Cardiaci).

Conflict of interest

None declared.

References

1. Ponikowski P, Voors AA, Anker SD, Bueno H, Cleland JGF, Coats AJS, Falk V, González-Juanatey JR, Harjola VP, Jankowska EA, Jessup M, Linde C, Nikoyanopoulos P, Parissis JT, Pieiske B, Riley JP, Rosano GMC, Ruilope LM, Ruschitzka F, Rutten FH, van der Meer P, ESC Scientific Document Group. 2016 ESC Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic heart failure: the task force for the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic heart failure of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) developed with the special contribution of the Heart Failure Association (HFA) of the ESC. Eur Heart J 2016; 37: 2129–2200.

2. Riegel B, Dickson VV, Faulkner KM. The special contribution of the Heart Failure Association of the ESC to the ESC Heart Failure guidelines. Eur Heart Fail 2016–2018: e0211768.

3. Jonkman NH, Westland H, Groenwold RH, Ägren S, Atienza F, Blue L, Brugink-André de la Porte PW, DeWalt D, Hebert PL, Heisler M, Jaarsma T, Kempen GI, Leventhal ME, Lok DJ, Mårtensson J, Muñiz J, Otsu H, Peters-Klimm F, Rich MW, Riegel B, Strömberg A, Tsuyuki RT, van Veldhuisen D, Trappenburg JC, Schuurmans MJ, Hoes AW. Do self-management interventions work in patients with heart failure? An individual patient data meta-analysis. Circulation 2016; 133: 1189–1198.

4. Poudel N, Kavookjian J, Scalese MJ. Motivational interviewing as a strategy to impact outcomes in heart failure patients: a systematic review. Patient 2020; 13: 43–55.

5. Juarez-Vela R, Sarabia-Cobo CM, Antonio-Solanas I, Vellone E, Durante A, Gea-Caballero V, Pérez-Calvo JJ. Investigating self-care in a sample of patients with decompensated heart failure: a cross-sectional study. Rev Clin Esp 2019; 219: 351–359.

6. Seid MA, Abdela OA, Zeleke EG. Adherence to self-care recommendations and associated factors among adult heart failure patients. From the patients’ point of view. PLoS ONE 2019; 14: e0211768.

7. Dellafiore F, Arrigoni C, Pittella F, Conte G, Magon A, Caruso R. Paradox of self-care gender differences among Italian patients with chronic heart failure: findings from a real-world cross-sectional study. BMJ Open 2018; 8: e021966.

8. Wagenaar KP, Broekhuizen BDL, Jaarsma T, Kok I, Mosterd A, Willems FF, Lissen GCM, Agema WRP, Anneveldt S, Lucas CMHB, Mannaerts HFJ, Wajon EMCJ, Dickstein K, Cramer MJ, Landman MAJ, Hoes AW, Rutten FH. Effectiveness of the European Society of Cardiology/Heart Failure Association website ‘heartfailurematters.org’ and an e-health adjusted care pathway in patients with stable heart failure: results of the ‘e-Vita HF’ randomized controlled trial. Eur J Heart Fail 2019; 21: 238–246.

9. Østergaard B, Mahrer-Imhof R, Wagner L, Barington T, Videbaek L, Lauridsen J. Effect of family nursing therapeutic conversations on health-related quality of life, self-care and depression among outpatients with heart failure: a randomized multi-centre trial. Patient Educ Couns 2018; 101: 1385–1393.

10. Clark AM, Wiens KS, Banner D, Kryworuchko J, Thirsk L, McLean L, Currie K. A systematic review of the main mechanisms of heart failure disease management interventions. Heart 2016; 102: 707–711.

11. Miller W, Rollnick W. Motivational Interviewing: helping people change. New York: The Guilford Press; 2013.

Funding

This study was funded by the Center of Excellence for Nursing Scholarship, Rome, Italy.

Supporting information

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

Figure S1. Box-plot on Self-Care maintenance scale scores (randomized set with available data).

Figure S2. Box-plot on Self-Care management scale scores (randomized set with available data).

Figure S3. Box-plot on Self-Care management scale scores (randomized set with available data).
12. Dehghan-Nayeri N, Ghaffari F, Sadeghi T, Mozaffari N. Effects of motivational interviewing on adherence to treatment regimens among patients with type 1 diabetes: a systematic review. *Diabetes Spectr* 2019; 32: 112–117.
13. Barrett S, Beg S, O’Halloran P, Kingsley M. Integrated motivational interviewing and cognitive behaviour therapy for lifestyle mediators of overweight and obesity in community-dwelling adults: a systematic review and meta-analyses. *BMC Public Health* 2018; 18: 1160.
14. Masterson Creber R, Patey M, Lee CS, Kuan A, Jurgens C, Riegel B. Motivational interviewing to improve self-care for patients with chronic heart failure: MITI-HF randomized controlled trial. *Patient Educ Couns* 2016; 99: 256–264.
15. Navidian A, Mobaraki H, Shakiba M. The effect of education through motivational interviewing compared with conventional education on self-care behaviors in heart failure patients with depression. *Patient Educ Couns* 2017; 100: 1499–1504.
16. Paradis V, Cossette S, Frasure-Smith N, Heppell S, Guertin MC. The efficacy of a motivational nursing intervention based on the stages of change on self-care in heart failure patients. *J Cardiovasc Nurs* 2010; 25: 130–141.
17. Durante A, Paturzo M, Motella A, Alvaro R, Vaughan Dickson V, Vellone E. Caregiver contribution to self-care in patients with heart failure: a qualitative descriptive study. *J Cardiovasc Nurs* 2019; 34: E28–E35.
18. Hodson AR, Peacock S, Holtslander L. Family caregiving for persons with advanced heart failure: an integrative review. *Palliat Support Care* 2019: 1–15.
19. Vellone E, Paturzo M, D’Agostino F, Petruzzo A, Masci S, Ausili D, Rebora P, Alvaro R, Riegel B. MOTIVATIONAL inteviewing to improve self-care in Heart Failure patients (MOTIVATE-HF): study protocol of a three-arm multicenter randomized controlled trial. *Contemp Clin Trials* 2017; 55: 34–38.
20. Riegel B, Lee C, Vaughan Dickson V, Carlson B. An update on the Self-Care of Heart Failure Index. *J Cardiovasc Nurs* 2009; 24: 485–497.
21. Vellone E, Riegel B, Cocchieri A, Barbaranelli C, D’Agostino F, Antonetti G, Glaser D, Alvaro R. Psychometric properties of the self-care of heart failure index version 6.2. *Res Nurs Health* 2013; 36: 500–511.
22. Callahan CM, Unverzagt FW, Hui SL, Perkins AJ, Hendrie HC. Six-item screen to identify cognitive impairment among potential subjects for clinical research. *Med Care* 2002; 40: 771–781.
23. Moyers T.B., Manuel, JK, Ernst, D. Motivational interviewing treatment integrity coding manual 4.1 2014.
24. Charlson M, Pompei P, Ales K, MacKenzie C. A new method of classifying prognostic comorbidity in longitudinal studies: development and validation. *J Chronic Dis* 1987; 40: 373–383.
25. Nasreddine ZS, Phillips NA, Bedirian V, Charbonneau S, Whitehead V, Collin I, Cummings JL, Chertkow H. The Montreal Cognitive Assessment, MoCA: a brief screening tool for mild cognitive impairment. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2005; 53: 695–699.
26. Riegel B, Lee CS, Dickson VV, Carlson B. An update on the self-care of heart failure index. *J Cardiovasc Nurs* 2009; 24: 485–497.