

### Improving Well-being for Heart Transplant Recipients: Implementation of a Patient Navigator Program

Krista Ramonas, MD, CPMC; Deborah Franzon, MD, UCSF; Nina Winterstein, LCSW - Health Navigator Foundation, San Francisco, CA [www.healthnavigators.org](http://www.healthnavigators.org)

#### Objective

When surveyed, heart transplant recipients cited managing all their healthcare needs as a primary concern 70% of the time (n=33). To respond to this need, a patient navigator program was created. We aim to show that providing individualized navigator services following discharge from the hospital post heart transplant improves well-being and perceptions about quality of life for recipients.

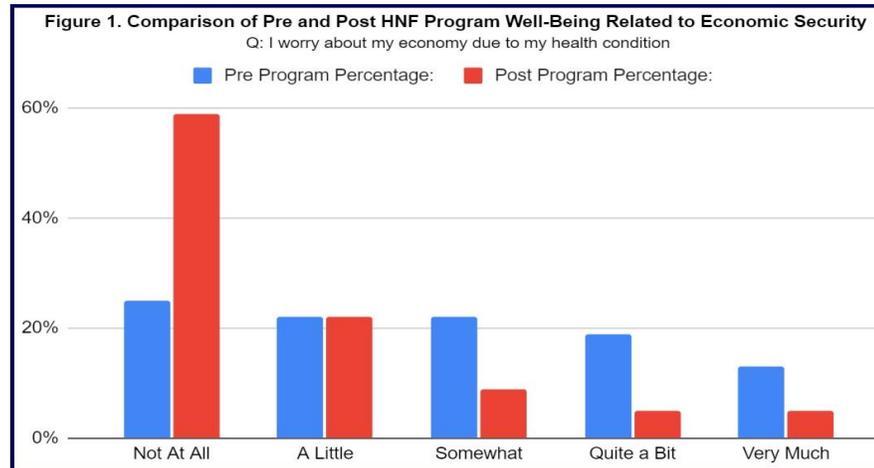
#### Methods

All heart transplant recipients from a single center between 12/01/2018-12/31/2020 were eligible and offered navigation services. Services included:

- Immediate phone, email, or HIPAA compliant text access to patient navigator, medication organizers, vital sign/symptom log, meal delivery, local resource guide, caregiver support, translation services, social work support, and peer networking.
- All enrolled participants were asked to complete a pre- and post-enrollment quality of life survey, utilizing the organ transplant symptom and well-being instrument (Forsberg, et al., 2012).
- Patients received navigation services for 4-6 weeks following hospital discharge, at no cost to recipients.
- Exit interviews were conducted at completion of navigation.
- Survey results were analyzed and compared pre and post-intervention with descriptive statistics.

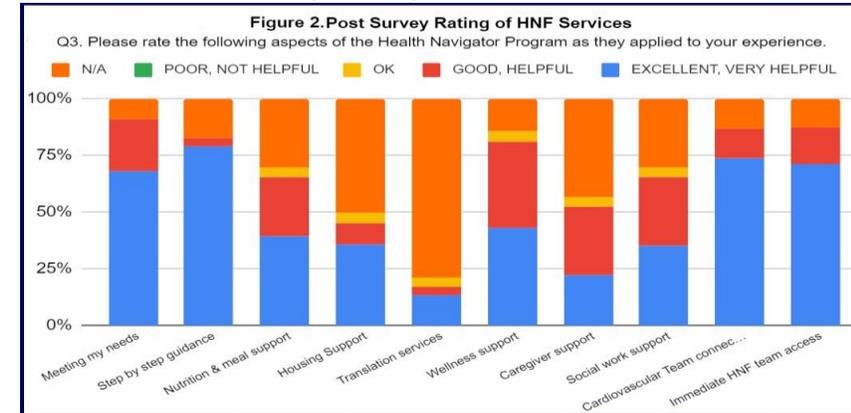
#### Results

33 patients enrolled in the program and completed pre enrollment quality of life survey. Dedicated navigator time averaged 1-4 hours/week per participant. 24 (73%) recipients completed a post program survey and exit interview. Pre-intervention, the average quality of life reported was 70.6 on a 100 point scale. 78% of respondents reported they could not complete desired activities. Post program, 100% of patients reported their quality of life to be better than expected. 90% believed the program contributed to their success. 95% of participants would recommend the program to others. When comparing pre and post program well-being perceptions around economic security, there was more worry about economic security (>30%) pre-intervention when compared with post-intervention (<20%) and post-intervention, the majority reported no worry at all (Figure 1). Participants reported step by step guidance, transplant team connection, and immediate access to HNF team as most valuable aspects of the program (Figure 2).



#### Conclusion

Results from this pilot suggest a positive impact of a patient navigator program in a heart transplant recipient population, particularly in its ability to meet individual needs and immediate access to a team member. Future work with a larger sample size is indicated to more fully assess the program's impact on quality of life, including qualitative analysis of exit interviews. Preliminary data suggest implementation of a patient navigator program contributes positively to heart transplant recipients' quality of life, well-being, and impressions of social determinants of health. Individualized navigation programs could be effective in improving overall health outcomes for transplant recipients.



#### References:

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