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Core 2. Epidemiology and Prevention of CV Disease: Physiology, Pharmacology and Lifestyle

Session Title: Exercise, Physical Activity and Rehabilitation II

Abstract 12683: A Qualitative Study of Barriers to Self-Care and Worksite Wellness Participation among Workers with CHD

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Over 3.5 million workers have coronary heart disease (CHD) with significant work limitations and increased disability. Self-care that encompasses adherence to medication and treatment regimens and symptom management is essential to patient management of CHD. Yet, little is known about how older workers with CHD practice self-care on a daily basis within the context of employment including their participation in worksite wellness programs (e.g., exercise, weight management, stress management). Purpose and

Methods: This qualitative descriptive study explored workplace barriers and facilitators to self-care including participation in worksite wellness programs. Thirty older adults (>age 50) with CHD who were working full time (>35 hours/week) participated in in-depth audiotaped interviews guided by a semi-structured interview guide. Qualitative data were analyzed using content thematic analysis (Atlas *ti* V6.2) to derive themes from the narrative accounts of self-care practice, workplace barriers and facilitators to adherence, symptom management and worksite wellness program participation.

Results: The sample was 47% Female, 32% African American, mean Age 59.21 years \pm 5.4 (range 50 to 72 years) and working mostly (55%) in professional or managerial jobs. Narrative accounts of self-care revealed that medication adherence was perceived as critical; but most struggled with diet and engaging in regular exercise due to job demands. Participation in worksite wellness programs was difficult due to competing work and life balance priorities. Coworker support was identified as essential to one's ability to overcome barriers to self-care and manage job stress that was associated with increased symptoms. But workers were selective in whom they trusted.

Conclusions: Self-care is challenging for older workers with CHD in part due to increased job stress and fatigue attributed to work activities. Workplace programs are underutilized due to barriers of time, job demands and job insecurity. Therefore, research to develop interventions that foster workplace support and facilitate self-care is needed. Worksite programs that effectively address job stress and are accessible to older workers with CHD are needed.

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