Age-related underutilization of left ventricular function evaluation in older heart failure patients.

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Age-related underutilization of left ventricular function evaluation in older heart failure patients.

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Abstract
BACKGROUND: Underutilization of left ventricular function (LVF) evaluation in older patients with heart failure has been well documented, but age-related variation in the use of LVF evaluation has not been.

METHODS: We studied age-related variation of LVF evaluation in older Medicare-beneficiaries discharged with a diagnosis of heart failure in 1994 in Alabama.

RESULTS: A total of 1,090 patients had a mean +/- SD age of 79 +/- 7.5 years; 60% were female and 18% were African American. Of these, 636 (58%) had LVF evaluation. Compared with patients aged 65 to 74 years, those 75 to 84 years of age and those aged 85 and older were less likely to receive LVF evaluation. Age of 85 years and older was also independently associated with lower odds of LTF evaluation.

CONCLUSION: The overall rate of LVF evaluation was low, and performance of evaluation decreased with patient age. Left ventricular function evaluation should be performed in all patients with heart failure. Considerable opportunities exist for improving care among hospitalized Medicare beneficiaries diagnosed with heart failure.

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