

# 36<sup>TH</sup> CARDIOVASCULAR NURSING & NURSE PRACTITIONERS MEETING

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## Challenges of living with cardiac resynchronization therapy in heart failure patients

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**Statement of the Problem:** Increasing numbers of patients with heart failure are requiring the implantation of Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy (CRT). Although CRT is an effective life-saving treatment, several challenges sometimes accompanies its insertion. There is evidence to suggest that physical and psychosocial challenges are experienced by some recipients of implanted devices with cardiac diseases. Areas of concern identified in several studies include physical difficulties, overprotection by the family, sexual relations changes, emotional challenges, and employment difficulties, dealing with shocks, lifestyle changes, costs and device longevity. This study aims to identify the challenges of Iranian heart failure patients living with CRT.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** A qualitative approach using conventional content analysis was adopted. 17 patients and three nurses were recruited from one university hospital and one private clinic located in Rasht, Iran. Participants were interviewed using semi structured interviews lasting 30-60 minutes.

**Findings:** Five themes emerged from the data analysis: (i) The threat of implantation; (ii) physical adversities; (iii) shock tragedy; (iv) lack of control over life; and (v) incompetency of the healthcare system. Each category is composed of subcategories.

**Conclusion & Significance:** All of the themes that emerged from the study play an important role in developing and implementing effective nursing care and providing education, consultation, and social support for the patients prior to implantation, during the recovery period and for long term management. Our findings warrant screening recipients specially those who have experienced device shock, for psychological symptoms in order to provide counseling interventions. Additional studies would therefore be of great value to examine such interventions.

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