Introduction

There is growing recognition that heart failure (HF) patients may have unmet palliative and end-of-life care needs. [1] Advance care planning and symptom-oriented palliation are especially important care issues in light of the heavy symptom burden and uncertain disease trajectory associated with HF.

Why a Heart Failure Search Filter?

Clinicians providing HF care need ongoing, timely access to the best available HF research evidence to inform their practice. Successful literature searching, however, can be undermined by such factors as the rapidly increasing size of the knowledge base, citation database complexity, inadequate searching skills, and clinical practice time pressures.

Search filters can be useful tools for busy clinician searchers. These experimentally developed, tested and validated search strategies provide a standardised shortcut to that small subset of relevant information existing within a larger pool of biomedical literature. [2]

PubMed Heart Failure Filter Translation

A PubMed version of the filter has also been developed. PubMed is a free interface for searching Medline, as well as some additional, non-Medline content. PubMed search filters can be saved as a hyperlink in any web environment for instantaneous single-click searching.

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The PubMed HF Filter is now freely available as a hyperlink in the Clinical Practice section of the CareSearch website (http://www.caresearch.com.au). Clicking on the filter link launches a real-time search for English language HF literature.

Developing the Medline Heart Failure Filter

CareSearch followed a strict research methodology to create a Heart Failure Filter for use in OvidSP Medline. [3] A Clinical Advisory Group guided the project.

Cited references from four major international HF clinical practice guidelines were used as a ’gold standard’ set. This set was split into three subsets:

The Final Heart Failure Filter

The final HF Filter comprises four terms:

Note: Terms with the OvidSP Medline .mp. suffix are searched for in the title, abstract and subject heading (MeSH) fields. The term with the .sh. suffix is searched for as a subject heading only.

Filter Performance

The OvidSP Medline Heart Failure Filter has a high rate of recall (or sensitivity), retrieving approximately 98% of relevant citations in two validation sets. When the filter was run across all of Medline, 150 of the first 200 citations retrieved (75%) were deemed relevant by a clinician reviewer.

Conclusion

A Heart Failure Filter was developed and validated in OvidSP Medline and then translated for the PubMed search interface. The PubMed version is available as a single-click mechanism on the CareSearch website where it has been combined with 40 topic searches of relevance to the palliative care of HF.

For further information on the CareSearch Heart Failure Filter please email jennifer.tieman@flinders.edu.au

References