Pilot Study of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy by Technology to Reduce Stress in Family Caregivers of Heart Failure Patients
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There has been surprisingly little research on the informal caregivers of adults with heart failure (HF), but recent studies have identified high stress, disrupted sleep, and poor adherence to self-care in these caregivers. The overarching goal of this research is to determine if there are ways to help these informal caregivers reduce their stress and maintain their health. Potentially one of the most effective ways to help caregivers to manage stress is cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). One challenge of intervening with caregivers is that most are confined to the home because of their caregiving duties. CBT can be delivered successfully by telephone, yet, an issue with telephone is the lack of visual cues. Therefore, we will deliver CBT by video technology (CBT-V) using iPad2 devices. This is a small pre-test, post-test pilot study to be conducted at the request of the NINR reviewers. We will enroll 5 stressed informal spousal caregivers caring for functionally compromised (New York Heart Association [NYHA] class III/IV) HF patients. Caregivers will receive 8 CBT sessions plus 4 booster sessions over a 3 month period. At enrollment and 3-months we will measure stress using the Perceived Stress Scale and urinary catecholamines. Sleep, a particularly sensitive indicator of stress, will be measured objectively with actigraphy. Self-care and adherence will be measured using a survey of health behaviors. Once completed, we will resubmit the grant to NINR.