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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Tsutsui, Hiroyuki; Tsuchihashi-Makaya, Miyuki; Kinugawa, Shintaro; Goto, Daisuke; Takeshita, Akira; JCARE-CARD Investigators</td>
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Clinical Characteristics and Outcome of Hospitalized Patients with Heart Failure in Japan: Rationale and Design of Japanese Cardiac Registry of Heart Failure in Cardiology (JCARE-CARD)

Hiroyuki Tsutsui, MD, PhD; Miyuki Tsuchihashi-Makaya, RN, PhD; Shintaro Kinugawa, MD, PhD; Daisuke Goto, MD, PhD; Akira Takeshita, MD, PhD, and for the JCARE-CARD Investigators

Running title: Heart failure registry in Japan

Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine, Sapporo 060-8638 (HT, SK, DG), Department of Gene Diagnostics and Therapeutics, Research Institute, International Medical Center of Japan, Tokyo 162-8655 (MM-T), Aso Iizuka Hospital, Iizuza 820-0018 (AT), Japan

Address for correspondence:
Hiroyuki Tsutsui, M.D., Ph.D.
Department of Cardiovascular Medicine,
Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine,
Kita-15, Nishi-7, Kita-ku, Sapporo 060-8638, Japan
Phone: +81-11-706-6970, FAX: +81-11-706-7874
e-mail: htsutsui@med.hokudai.ac.jp

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Abstract

**Background**  Heart failure, defined as a complex clinical syndrome that can result from any structural or functional cardiac disorder that impairs the ability of the ventricle to fill with or eject blood, is a leading cause of mortality and hospitalization for adults older than 65 years in industrialized countries. The characteristics and outcome of patients with heart failure have been described by a number of previous epidemiological studies and large scale clinical trials, which have been performed mainly in the United States and Europe. Very little information is available on this issue in Japan.

**Methods and Results** The Japanese Cardiac Registry of Heart Failure in Cardiology (JCARE-CARD) is designed to study prospectively the characteristics, treatment, and outcomes in a broad sample of patients hospitalized with heart failure at teaching hospitals throughout Japan between January 2004 to June 2005 and the outcomes including death and hospital readmission will be followed through 2006 (mean follow-up at least 1 year). Participating cardiologists identify patients admitted due to the worsening of heart failure symptoms. Demographics, medical history, severity of heart failure, treatment, and outcome data are collected and entered into a database via secure web browser technology. As of June 2005, baseline data on 2676 patients with HF have been registered from 164 participating hospitals.

**Conclusions**  The JCARE-CARD will provide important insights into patients with heart failure in routine clinical practice in Japan. Moreover, it will provide the framework for improved management strategies for these patients.

**Key Words:** Heart failure; Registry; Management; Outcome
**Introduction**

Heart failure (HF) is defined as a complex clinical syndrome that can result from any structural or functional cardiac disorder that impairs the ability of the ventricle to fill with or eject blood according to the guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of chronic heart failure of American College of Cardiology (ACC)/American Heart Association (AHA) and European Society of Cardiology (ESC). The cardiac manifestations of HF are dyspnea and fatigue, which may limit exercise tolerance, and fluid retention, which may lead to pulmonary congestion and peripheral edema. HF is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in industrialized countries. It is also a growing public health problem, mainly because of aging of the population and the increase in the prevalence of HF in the elderly. The clinical characteristics, treatment, and outcome of these patients have been well described by a number of both community-based and hospital-based studies, as well as by clinical trials of HF treatment. However, information derived from clinical trials that is not necessarily representative of “real world” patients with HF. Moreover, these studies have been performed mainly in the United States and Europe.

Very limited information is available on the characteristics and outcome of patients with HF in Japan. Our previous studies were the first detailed analysis of clinical characteristics, management, and outcome including mortality and HF-related readmission in Japan. They demonstrated that HF patients were elderly, contained a larger population of women especially at higher age, had a higher incidence of overt HF despite a relatively normal ejection fraction (EF). As many as 35% of hospitalized patients with HF were readmitted within 1 year of hospital discharge. These characteristics are consistent with those of patient population encountered in community-based studies reported previously. The Japanese Cardiac Registry of Heart Failure in Cardiology (JCARE-CARD) is developed to provide a national prospective registry database describing the clinical characteristics, treatment, and outcomes of patients hospitalized due to
the worsening of HF symptoms. It will also establish the framework for future initiatives to improve the outcomes of these patients. Specifically, this study is aimed to determine the influence of clinical characteristics on the patient outcomes and further identify the predictive risk of adverse outcomes. This report presents a detailed description of the rationale and design of JCARE-CARD.
Methods

Study Design

JCARE-CARD is a multicenter registry designed to compile a large clinical database on the characteristics, management, and outcomes of patients hospitalized for the worsening of HF in Japan. Baseline data are collected during the episode of index hospitalization from January 2004 to June 2005. Follow-up data will be collected at least 1 year after the index admission.

Study Objectives

The specific objectives of the JCARE-CARD include the following: (1) to describe the demographic and clinical characteristics of hospitalized patients with HF in Japan; (2) to describe the in hospital and long-term outcomes; and (3) to identify the factors including specific treatments associated with improved or worsened outcomes.

Study Hospitals

The study hospitals include the cardiology units serving as primary, secondary, and tertiary referral medical centers for cardiovascular patients across Japan. They are authorized as the teaching hospitals by the Japanese Circulation Society.

Study Patients

For this registry, HF is defined as a complex clinical syndrome that can result from any structural or functional cardiac disorder that impairs the ability of the ventricle to fill with or eject blood. The presence of HF was confirmed by using
the Framingham criteria (Table 1).\(^5\) Patients readmitted to the hospital during the study period are included only by the first hospitalization (index admission). Patients must be at least 15 years old at the time of hospital admission. Eligibility is not contingent on the use of any particular therapeutic agent or regimen.

**Data Collection and Processing**

Data are entered using a web-based electronic data capture (EDC) system licensed by the JCARE-CARD (www.jcare-card.jp). The EDC system was chosen because of perceived advantages over the traditional, paper-based data entry process, including the ability to inform participating hospitals of missing or illogical data fields at the time of data submission. A study web site has been created with a public area providing general information regarding this study and a registry site-only area that provides information concerning data registry (Figures 1 and 2). The study hospitals are encouraged to register the patients as consecutively as possible. The diagnosis of HF was established by the simultaneous presence of at least two major criteria or one major criterion in conjunction with two minor criteria by use of the Framingham criteria (Table 1). Compliance with these methods of registry is not strictly monitored.

For each case, baseline data recorded on the form include (1) demography; (2) causes of HF; (3) precipitating causes; (4) comorbidities; (5) complications; (6) clinical status; (7) electrocardiographic and echocardiographic findings; (8) treatment including discharge medications.

The status of all patients is surveyed at least 1 year after admission and the following information is obtained; (1) survival, (2) cause of death, and (3) the hospital readmission due to an exacerbation of HF that required more than continuation of their usual therapy on prior admission.

**Patient Confidentiality**

The JCARE-CARD protocol was organized to ensure compliance with the
Guidelines for the Epidemiological Research published by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The original study protocol was approved by the Institutional review board (IRB) at Kyushu University. IRB approval at each participating hospital is also required for the participation in this registry. Informed consent is attained for each patient. The study does not include any protocol-specified alteration of treatment or any other aspect of hospital care. Patient confidentiality is preserved because direct patient identifiers, such as name, address, and identification number, are not collected. Access to the EDC system at each hospital is carefully controlled by the data management office.

**Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize baseline characteristics, treatment, and outcomes for the patients and for specific subgroups of interest.
Results

The JCARE-CARD enrolled HF patients from January 2004 to June 2005. As of June 2005, baseline data on 2676 patients with HF have been registered from 164 participating hospitals (Figure 3 and Table 2).
Discussion

The characteristics and outcomes of patients with HF are poorly defined despite the public health importance of this disease. The JCARE-CARD, aimed to better characterize this population, is the first diverse, large-scale, prospective multicenter database of patients hospitalized for HF in Japan.

We have previously reported the characteristics and outcomes of patients admitted to the urban cardiology departments in Fukuoka, Japan. These studies highlighted several important features of Japanese patients with HF. One key feature was the old age of HF patients. The mean age of HF patients was 69 years; 70% were ≥ 65 years of age. Especially, women were mostly found in over 70 years. This is consistent with the previous community-based studies. Another important feature was the high proportion of patients with relatively preserved EF. The half of patients with definite HF who had echocardiography had normal EF (≥ 50%), indicating the contribution of diastolic dysfunction in the pathogenesis of HF. Most interesting and important finding was a relatively good survival prognosis in our study patients; the 1-year mortality rate being 8.3%. A survival prognosis of patients with decreased EF (< 40%) was still good; the 1-year mortality rate being 9.1%. At the first glance, this finding appears to be contradicted the generally held notion that advanced age and more comorbidity may be related to the poor survival. In contrast to the relatively low mortality, rates of readmission for HF were as high as 40% within 1 year after discharge. This value is comparable to those in prior studies (a 3- to 6-month readmission rate 30 to 50%). The most commonly identified cause for hospital readmission was lack of compliance with medical and dietary treatment (48%).

Even though our previous studies have provided a valuable insight into the clinical characteristics, outcomes, and the potential effective treatment strategies for HF patients in Japan, the generalization of these results is questioned because our investigation was conducted in a small number of patients (n=230). Therefore, it is of critical importance to analyze the data of HF patients in routine clinical practice on a national basis and to form a database for future investigations. For
this purpose, JCARE-CARD is designed to focus on the demographic and clinical characteristics, treatment strategies, and outcomes in patients admitted to the hospitals throughout Japan. It is important to consider the JCARE-CARD in the context of other large-scale databases such as ADHERE or EuroHeart that have been established to evaluate epidemiologic and clinical aspects of HF.\(^8,10,11\) These administrative data sets have provided important insights concerning the prognostic and public health role of a number of classic epidemiologic factors as well as information on medication use. The JCARE-CARD is expected to provide us an important information regarding the characteristics, treatment, and outcomes of HF patients in Japan, which may be complementary to that gathered from the studies in Europe and USA. This information is often critical to our understanding of the clinical characteristics of HF, including independent prognostic predictors.

There have been 2 large-scale registries of HF reported; the EuroHeart Failure Survey from Europe and the Acute Decompensated Heart Failure National Registry (ADHERE) from the United States. The EuroHeart Failure Survey registered 11304 HF patients in the departments of cardiology, cardiovascular surgery, general internal medicine and geriatrics at 115 hospitals including both general hospitals and university centers from 24 European Society of Cardiology (ESC) member countries over a 6-week period during March 2000 and May 2001.\(^9-11\) Patients were enrolled as HF if they fulfilled at least one of the following criteria: 1) a clinical diagnosis of HF during the admission; 2) a diagnosis of HF recorded at any time in the last 3 years; 3) administration of a loop diuretic for any reason other than renal failure during 24 h of death or discharge; 4) pharmacological treatment for HF or ventricular dysfunction within 24 h of death or discharge. The Euro Heart Failure Survey described the quality of care, diagnostic and therapeutic for patients with HF in Europe. Outcome was further assessed by repeat interviews in 6-12 months.\(^25,26\)

The ADHERE is a registry designed to study characteristics, management, and outcomes in a broad sample of patients hospitalized with acute decompensated HF throughout the United States.\(^8\) Participating hospitals identify patients with a
primary or secondary discharge diagnosis of HF. Medical history, management, treatment, and outcome data are collected through review of medical records and entered into a database via secure web browser technology. Of available data (105388 patients from 274 hospitals), the mean age was 72.4 years old, and 52% were women. The most common comorbid conditions were hypertension (73%), coronary artery disease (57%), and diabetes (44%). Evidence of mild or no impairment of systolic function was found in 46% of patients. In hospital mortality was 4.0%. The ADHERE data provided important insights into the clinical characteristics and patterns of care of these patients. Similar to our previous studies, the ADHERE demonstrated that many patients hospitalized with HF had mild or no impairment of systolic ventricular function. These registry data demonstrates significant differences in the definition of HF between patients hospitalized due to HF and those enrolled in randomized clinical trials.

Even though JCARE-CARD and ADHERE share many similarities in the study design and rationale, there are several important differences between these registries. Follow-up data are not obtained in the ADHERE; therefore, the subsequent clinical outcome including death and readmission of patients after the index hospitalization is unknown. Data are gathered retrospectively after hospital discharge in the ADHERE, which may preclude prospective analysis of particular treatments in these patients.

**Limitations**

Several crucial limitations inherent in the design of the JCARE-CARD should be considered. First, the JCARE-CARD data are based on the decisions made by the participating cardiologists. The lack of a precise, universal definition of HF makes this type of registry difficult and open to many criticisms. However, it is not the objective of this survey to restrict enrollment to the narrowly defined population of HF usually included in clinical trials but rather to include a broad range of patients reflecting the current reality of clinical practice rather than trials.
All participating hospitals are authorized as the teaching hospital by the Japanese Circulation Society. In addition, the information regarding the study protocol was regularly provided at the national as well as local meetings and also via monthly e-mail notice. Second, this survey relies on the hospitals to volunteer their support. This almost certainly biased the study towards larger centers, which could support research staff. In addition, we excluded other specialist wards than cardiology from this survey.

Conclusions

The JCARE-CARD will provide the first, valuable information on current patient characteristics, management, and outcomes in a broad sample of Japanese patients in routine clinical practice who are hospitalized with HF. These data may indicate that there are substantial opportunities to improve the efficiency of management for these patients. By helping to better characterize this disease state, it will ultimately have a significant impact on public health at the national level in Japan.
Acknowledgments

The JCARE-CARD is supported by the Japanese Circulation Society and the Japanese Society of Heart Failure. It is supported by grants from Health Sciences Research Grants from the Japanese the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Japan Heart Foundation, and Japan Arteriosclerosis Prevention Fund.
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Figure Legends

**Figure 1** Screen-shot of a top page of JCARE-CARD web site (www.jcare-card.jp).

**Figure 2** Sample screen-shot of a page of the electronic case report form with sample pull-down menus from the JCARE-CARD web site.

**Figure 3** JCARE-CARD cumulative numbers of registered patients from January 2004 to June 2005.
Table 1. Framingham criteria for HF

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neck vein distension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiographic cardiomegaly (increasing heart size on chest x-ray)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute pulmonary edema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3 gallop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased central venous pressure (&gt;16 cm water at right atrium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation time $\geq$ 25 seconds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatojugular reflux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulmonary edema, visceral congestion, or cardiomegaly at autopsy</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Bilateral ankle edema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nocturnal cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyspnea on ordinary exertion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatomegaly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleural effusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in vital capacity by one third from maximum value recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tachycardia (rate $\geq$ 120/min)</td>
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Major or Minor Criteria

| Weight loss $\geq$ 4.5 kg in 5 days in response to treatment                  |

The diagnosis of HF was established by the simultaneous presence of at least two major criteria or one major criterion in conjunction with two minor criteria.
Table 2. Number of participating hospitals and registered patients among 8 regions in Japan

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<th>Region</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Tohoku</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanto</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokuriku</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokai</td>
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<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinki</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chugoku</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>239</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shikoku</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyushu</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>164</strong></td>
<td><strong>2676</strong></td>
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Appendix 1

JCARE-CARD Investigators

Principal Investigators:
Akira Takeshita (Aso Iizuka Hospital); Hiroyuki Tsutsui (Hokkaido University)

Coinvestigators:
Shitaro Kinugawa, Daisuke Goto (Hokkaido University); Akira Kitabatake (Showa Hospital; Past President of the Japanese Circulation Society); Kazuya Yonezawa (National Hospital Organization Hakodate Hospital); Kunio Shirato (Saito Hospital); Hiroshi Kasanuki (Tokyo Wemen's Medical University); Ryozo Nagai (Tokyo University); Tohru Izumi (Kitazato University); Satoshi Ogawa (Keio University); Iwao Yamaguchi (University of Tsukuba); Mitsuaki Isobe (Tokyo Medical and Dental University); Tetsu Yamaguchi (Toranomon Hospital, President of the Japanese Circulation Society); Jou Takegoshi (Kanazawa Medical University); Yoshifusa Aizawa (Niigata University); Hiroyuki Yokoyama (National Hospital Organization Shizuoka Medical Center); Hisayoshi Fujiwara (Gifu University); Hitonobu Tomoike (National Cardiovascular Center); Masatsugu Hori (Osaka University, President of the Japanese Society of Heart Failure); Mistuhiro Yokoyama (Kobe University); Junichi Yoshikawa (Osaka Hospital of Japan Seafarers Relief Association); Masunori Matsuzaki (Yamaguchi University, President of the Japanese College of Cardiology); Tsutomu Imaizumi (Kurume University); Takahiro Matsumoto (National Hospital Organization Kyushu Medical Center); Tsutomu Yamazaki (Tokyo University); Tetsuya Mizoue (International Medical Center of Japan); Reiko Kishi (Hokkaido University); Miyuki Tsuchihashi-Makaya (International Medical Center of Japan),

Coordinators:
Satoko Abe, Mayumi Koasa (Hokkaido University)
Appendix 2

Participating Hospitals and Cardiologists

Tsutomu Yoshikawa, Toshihisa Anzai (Cardiology Division, Department of Medicine, Keio University School of Medicine); Hisashi Matsuo, Tooru Kaji (Keiwakai Ebetsu Hospital); Masashi Nakamura, Takatoshi Mochizuki, Atsushi Wada, Yoshitaka Hiroe, Kazuya Nakagawa (Department of Cardiology, Chigasaki Municipal Hospital); Shinya Hiramitsu, Kenji Miyagishima, Kazumasa Mori, Hisashi Kimura, Hitoshi Hishida (Division of Cardiology, Department of Internal Medicine, Fujita Health University School of Medicine); Tohru Izumi, Takayuki Inomata, Hironari Nakano (Department of Cardio-angiology, Kitasato University School of Medicine); Satoshi Kojima, Masataka Sumiyoshi, Masaki Kawamura (Department of Cardiology, Juntendo University Shizuoka Hospital); Mitsumasa Ohyanagi, Tsuyoshi Sakoda (Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Coronary Heart Disease, Hyogo College of Medicine); Yukio Nakamura, Yuko Takeda (Department of Cardiology, National Hospital Organization Kanazawa Medical Center); Yoshinori Doi, Jun Takata (Department of Medicine & Geriatrics, Kochi Medical School); Masayoshi Yoh, Yoshitake Yokokura (Department of Cardiology, YOKOKURA Hospital); Chiharu Take (Jiseikai Hospital); Ryozo Nagai, Koichiro Kinugawa (Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, University of Tokyo); Akira Yamashina, Yoshifumi Takata, Manabu Miyagi, Satoshi Hida (Department of Cardiology, Tokyo Medical University); Hiroshi Inoue, Hidetsugu Asano, Tadakazu Hirai (The 3nd Department of Internal Medicine, University of Toyama); Nobuakira Takeda, Akihiro Nishiyama, Chihiro Shikata, Tetsuaki Sekikawa, Nobuaki Kimura (Department of General Medicine, Aoto Hospital, The Jikei University School of Medicine); Takashi Nirei, Yasunaga Hiyoshi, Tomohiro Yamada, Kosuke Goto (Tokyo Metropolitan Health and Medical Treatment Corporation Ebara Hospital); Mitsuaki Isobe, Jun-ichi Suzuki, Yasuhiro Maejima (Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Tokyo Medical and Dental University); Yoshinori Koga, Hisao Ikeda, Tetsuya Miyamoto, Atsushi Kato, Hirohiko Morita
School of Medicine); Yoshifusa Aizawa, Makoto Kodama, Yuji Okura (Niigata University Medical and Dental Science); Shinya Okamoto, Ryouichi Ishisu, Masato Sakurai, Masaya Taniguchi, Hideshi Kurachi (Department of Cardiology, Nabari City Hospital); Hajime Ieki, Michio Takamatsu, Kazuo Takagi, Jun-ichi Sugiyama (Saku Central Hospital); Satoru Kawano (Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba); Tomiyoshi Saito (Shirakawa Kousei General Hospital, 2nd Department of Internal Medicine); Matahiro Yabuta (Nara Prefectural Nara Hospital); Masakazu Teragaki (Department of Cardiology and Internal Medicine, Wakakusa Daiichi Hospital); Akihito Tsuchida, Jun Agata (Hokkaido JR Sapporo Hospital); Seiji Hokimoto, Shuichi Oshima (Division of Cardiology, Kumamoto Central Hospital); Fumihiko Saeki (Division of Internal Medicine, Toshiba General Hospital); Kozue Ikeda (Cardiology Division, Department of Internal Medicine, Saiseikai Yamagata Saisei Hospital); Tetsuya Sato, Toru Hioka, Kiyoaki Maekawa, Hironori Saito, Soichiro Fuke (Department of Cardiology, Okayama Red Cross General Hospital); Osami Kohmoto, Yurika Hotta, Harumi Ogawa (Cardiology, Saitama Medical School); Kohei Muramatsu, Hitoshi Kamiunten (Division of Cardiology, Yamaguchi Red Cross Hospital); Hirotaka Tatsukawa (Omihachiman Municipal Hospital); Ikuo Segawa (The Second Department of Internal Medicine, Iwate Medical University); Mitsuhiro Yokoyama, Hiroya Kawai (Division of Cardiovascular and Respiratory Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Kobe University Graduate School of Medicine); Satoshi Saito, Junko Honye, Tadateru Takayama, Makoto Ichikawa (Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, Department of Medicine, Nihon University School of Medicine); Jun Fuse, Masao Chino, Eiji Takagi, Munehisa Sakamoto (National Hospital Organization Tokyo Medical Center); Eitaro Kodani, Hirotsugu Atarashi (Department of Internal Medicine and Cardiology, Nippon Medical School Tama-Nagayama Hospital); Yoshihiko Saito, Manabu Horii, Shiro Uemura (First Department of Internal Medicine, Nara Medical University); Takashi Oki, Yukio Mizuguchi, Yoshifumi Oishi (Tokushima National Hospital, National Hospital Organization); Tomomi Ide (Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Kyushu University School of Medicine);
Shigeru Nakamura, Yoshihisa Enjoji, Tomoko Kobayashi, Daisuke Kambayashi, Atsushi Funatsu, Masahiro Mizobuchi, Tsuyoshi Ono, Kensaku Shibata, Ryuji Yamamoto (Cardiovascular Center, Kyoto Katsura Hospital); Ken-ichi Namba (Department of Internal Medicine, Sanraku Hospital); Fumio Terasaki, Nobuaki Okuda, Akira Ukimura, Yasushi Kitaura (Department of Internal Medicine III, Osaka Medical College); Hideaki Yoshino, Masayuki Yotsukura (Second Department of Internal Medicine, School of Medicine, Kyorin University); Shigeo Umezawa, Takayuki Ohnishi (Hiratsuka Kyousai General Hospital); Yuji Hashimoto (Kameda Medical Center); Masakazu Yamagishi, Hidekazu Ino, Noboru Fujino (Division of Cardiology, Graduate School of Medical Science, Kanazawa University); Katsuki Hashimoto (National Hospital Organization Osaka Minami Medical Center); Akihiro Endo, Yasuyuki Yoshida, Hiroshi Nasu, Toshimitsu Suga (Division of Cardiology, Tottori Prefectural Central Hospital); Yukihito Sato, Kazuya Nagao, Tadashi Miyamoto, Yoshiki Takatsu (Hyogo Prefectural Amagasaki Hospital); Nobuyuki Shiba, Hirotaka Numaguchi, Hiroko Tada, Boon Hoon Ong, Jun Takahashi, Yuji Wakayama, Takanori Takahashi, Jun Ohta, Tsuyoshi Shinozaki (Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine); Toshihiro Nakamura, Akemi Aso (The Department of Cardiology, National Hospital Organization Kyushu Medical Center); Kazuharu Sunami, Jun Takahashi (Department of Internal Medicine, Okayama Kyoritsu Hospital); Mitsutaka Yamamoto (The Division of Cardiology, Saiseikai Fukuoka General Hospital); Hisanori Shinohara (National Hospital Organization Zentsuji National Hospital the Division of Cardiology); Hiroaki Matsubara, Takahisa Sawada (Department of Cardiovascular Degenerative Medicine, Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine Graduate School of Medical Science); Takuroh Imamura (1st Department of Internal Medicine, University of Miyazaki); Toshikazu Yabe (Department of Cardiology, Kochi Prefectural Hata Kenmin Hospital); Junnichi Konishi (Kyoritu General Hospital); Osamu Sasaki (Saitama Medical Center, Saitama Medical School); Yoshio Kawase, Katsunori Hato, Atsushi Doi, Nobuya Matsushita (Izumi General City Hospital); Yoshiaki Katahira, Shigeo Sugawara,
Yoshiaki Mibiki, Tamon Yamanaka (Cardiovascular Center, Tohoku Kosei-nenkin Hospital); Teruhisa Tanabe, Yutaka Shiina, Osamu Iwata, Toru Kita, Takeshi Kimura, Yutaka Furukawa, Neiko Ozasa, Yukihito Sato (Division of Clinical Cardiology, Kyoto University Hospital); Tomoharu Nakamura (Kushiro City Doctor Association Hospital); Yoichi Nakamura, Sumio Komatsu (Matsuyama Shimin Hospital); Masayasu Nakagawa, Toshiya Fujiwara (Department of Cardiology, Akita City General Hospital); Hidetoshi Tamura (Cardiovascular Division, Tachikawa Sougo General Hospital); Makoto Takenaga (Miyazaki Cardiovascular Hospital); Kenji Kada, Kazutaka Mori (Social Insurance Chukyo Hospital); Hiroyuki Daida, Hiromasa Suzuki (Department of Cardiology, Juntendo University School of Medicine); Takeshi Tokunaga, Kazuo Kobayashi (Toride Kyodo General Hospital); Futoshi Anan (Internal Medicine 1, Oita University); Hiroshi Fujita (Kyoto Second Red Cross Hospital); Tohru Yamawaki (Iizuka Hospital); Tatsuya Kawasaki (Department of Cardiology, Matsushita Memorial Hospital); Yutaka Eki, Hidetaka Seguchi, Shuichi Taguchi (National Hospital Organization Mito Medical Center); Hitoshi Adachi (Gunma Prefectural Cardiovascular Center); Naoki Nozaki (Department of Cardiology, Pulmonology, and Nephrology. Course of Internal Medicine and Therapeutics, Yamagata University Faculty of Medicine); Chiei Takanaka (Hamamatsu Medical Center); Tsutomu Imaizumi, Hiroyuki Nakaura, Katsunori Osada (The Third Department of Internal Medicine, Kurume University School of Medicine); Toshiyuki Degawa, Masato Yamamoto (Sempo Tokyo Takanawa Hospital); Kazuho Miyakoshi, Takahito Yuki (Minami Osaka Hospital); Masahiro Okazaki (The Second Department of Internal Medicine, University of Occupational and Environmental Health); Akio Kohama, Akihiro Tani (Osaka Seamen’s Insurance Hospital); Takashi Fujii, Toshiro Kitagawa, Yasuyuki Tomohiro, Kouji Maeda, Masakazu Kobayashi, Eiji Kunita (JA Hiroshima General Hospital); Kazuhiko Nishigaki, Hisayoshi Fujiwara (Second Department of Internal medicine, Gifu University Graduate School of Medicine); Shigeru Yokawa (Department of Internal Medicine, Toyama City Hospital); Masaru Araki (Department of Cardiology, Japan Labour
Health and Welfare Organization Moji Rosai Hospital; Tohru Ohe, Kazufumi Nakamura (Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Okayama University Graduate School of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences); Hiroshi Okamoto, Takashi Yokota, Yoshinori Ohmura (Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine)
Appendix 3

Patient Data Form for JCARE-CARD

Step 1. Demographic data

1. Date of registry
2. Date of admission
3. Date of discharge
4. Date of birth
5. Age
6. Sex
10. Height
11. Weight
12. Body mass index

Step 2. Clinical data  (Medical history)

1. Causes of heart failure
   1. Ischemic
   2. Hypertensive
   3. Cardiomyopathic, dilated
   4. Cardiomyopathic, hypertrophic
   5. Cardiomyopathic, dilated phase of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy
   6. Valvular heart disease
   7. Congenital heart disease
   8. Others
   9. Unknown

2. Precipitating causes of heart failure
   1. Lack of compliance with sodium and fluid restriction
   2. Lack of compliance with drugs
   3. Over activity
   4. Infection
5. Arrhythmias
6. Ischemia
7. Uncontrolled hypertension
8. Others
9. Unknown

3. Comorbidity
1. Hypertension (Blood pressure $>140/90$ mmHg)
2. Diabetes mellitus (Fasting blood sugar $\geq 125$ mg/dL or 2-hours blood sugar $\geq 200$ mg/dL)
   
   Insulin treatment
3. Hyperlipidemia (Total cholesterol $\geq 220$ mg/dL or LDL $\geq 140$ mg/dL)
4. Renal failure (Serum creatinine 2.5 mg/dL or dialysis)
   
   Serum creatinine: [ ] mg/dL
   
   Hemodialysis
5. Hyperuricemia (Serum uric acid $>7.0$ mg/dL)
   
   Serum uric acid: [ ] mg/dL
6. Cerebrovascular diseases
   
   (Brain infarction, Brain hemorrhage, Transient ischemic attack)
7. Anemia (Hemoglobin $\leq 10$ g/dL)
   
   Hemoglobin: [ ] g/dL
8. COPD
9. Smoking

4. Complication
1. Prior myocardial infarction
2. Atrial fibrillation or flatter
3. Sustained ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation

5. Medical history
1. First-time diagnosis of HF
2. Interval after the initial diagnosis of HF
3. Prior hospitalization due to heart failure
4. Percutaneous coronary intervention
5. Coronary artery bypass surgery
6. Valve surgery

**Step 3. Clinical data (Medical status)**

1. New York Heart Association (NYHA) functional class on admission and at discharge
2. Heart rate
3. Blood pressure
4. Left bundle branch block
   
   QRS duration: [ ] msec
5. Left ventricular hypertrophy (SV$_1$+RV$_5$ or V$_6$$\geq$3.5mV or RV$_5$ or V$_6$$>2.6$mV)
6. Echocardiographic data on admission and at discharge
   
   1. Left ventricular end-diastolic and end-systolic diameters
   2. Left ventricular ejection fraction
   3. Left ventricular wall thickness
   4. Mitral regurgitation
   5. Transmitral velocity (E/A ratio, Deceleration time of E wave)
7. Serum BNP levels at admission and discharge

**Step 4. Discharge status and treatment**

1. Discharge status
   
   1. In-hospital death
      
      Autopsy
   2. Discharge to home
   3. Transfer to other wards for heart failure treatment
   4. Transfer to other wards to treat other diseases
2. Discharge medications
1. Angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors
   - [ ] Enalapril
   - [ ] Lisinopril
   - [ ] Perindopril
   - [ ] Imidapril
   - [ ] Captopril
   - [ ] Cilazapril
   - [ ] Temocapril
   - [ ] Others
   - [ ] No

2. Angiotensin II receptor blockers
   - [ ] Losartan
   - [ ] Valsartan
   - [ ] Candesartan
   - [ ] Telmisartan
   - [ ] Others
   - [ ] No

3. Beta-blockers
   - [ ] Carvedilol: daily dosage [ ] mg/dl
   - [ ] Bisoprolol: daily dosage [ ] mg/dl
   - [ ] Metoprolol: daily dosage [ ] mg/dl
   - [ ] Others: daily dosage [ ] mg/dl
   - [ ] No

4. Diuretics
   - [ ] Thiazide
   - [ ] Furosemide
   - [ ] Azosemide
   - [ ] Spironolactone
   - [ ] Eplerenone
   - [ ] Others
   - [ ] No

5. Digitalis
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

6. Oral inotropic agents
   - [ ] Pimobendan
   - [ ] Docarpamine
   - [ ] Others
   - [ ] No

7. Calcium channel blockers
   - [ ] Amlodipine
   - [ ] Nefedipine
   - [ ] Diltiazem
   - [ ] Others
   - [ ] No

8. Alpha-blockers
   - [ ] Doxazosin
   - [ ] Others
   - [ ] No

9. Nitrates
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

10. Antiarrhythmic agents
[ ] Amiodarone  [ ] Sotalol  [ ] Bepridil  
[ ] Disopyramide  [ ] Aprindine  [ ] Mexiletine  
[ ] Flecaainide  [ ] Pilsicainide  [ ] Cibenzoline  
[ ] Others  [ ] No  

11. Aspirin  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No  

12. Antiplatelet agents  
[ ] Ticlopidine  [ ] Cilostazol  [ ] Others  
[ ] No  

13. Warfarin  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No  

14. Statin  
[ ] Pravastatin  [ ] Fluvastatin  [ ] Atorvastatin  
[ ] Simvastatin  [ ] Others  [ ] No  

15. Participation to clinical trials  
[ ] J-CHF  [ ] Bisoprolol  
[ ] Others  
[ ] No  

3. Non-pharmacological therapy  
1. Permanent pacemaker  
2. Cardiac resynchronization therapy  
3. Implantable cardioverter defibrillator  
4. Left ventricular assist device  
5. Cardiac transplantation  

**Step 5. Long term outcomes**  
1. Date of survey  
2. Death  
   1. Date of death  
   2. All cause death
3. Cause of death

[  ] Cardiac death [  ] Non-cardiac death [  ] Unknown

4. Autopsy

3. Hospital readmission due to an exacerbation of heart failure

1. Date of readmission

2. Date of discharge

4. Sustained ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation
Japanese CARDiac REGistry in CHF-CARDiology

慢性心不全の増悪のため
入院治療を要する患者を対象とした調査研究

研究の目的

研究の概要

患者登録
### STEP 1 患者基礎データ

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<td>年 月 日</td>
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<tr>
<td>医師名</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>患者ID</td>
<td>先生が患者を特定できるもの。半角英数字の組み合せで最大12文字まで。’-‘’/‘は入力不可。ただし氏名は不可。</td>
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<td>生年月日</td>
<td>年 月 日</td>
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<td>身長/体重</td>
<td>cm (□不明)/kg (□不明)</td>
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次のステップに進むには左のボタンを押してください。
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Cumulative Numbers of Registered Patients

Date