**ICD-FORUM - WEB-BASED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR PATIENTS WITH IMPLANTABLE CARDIOVERTER DEFIBRILLATORS**

**S.M. Schulz1,2**, R. Zniva1,2, O. Ritter2,3, C. Wacker4, M. Jack5, G. Groschup6,

T .Deneke7, P. Pauli1,2

1. Comprehensive Heart Failure Center - Wuerzburg, University Hospital Wuerzburg, Wuerzburg, Germany

2. Department of Psychology I, University of Wuerzburg, Wuerzburg, Germany

3. Klinik für Kardiologie und Pulmologie, Medizinische Hochschule Brandenburg, Campus Klinikum Brandenburg Havel, Germany

4. Innere Abteilung, Kardiologie, Klinikum Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany

5. Klinik Bad Woerishofen, Deutsche Rentenversicherung Schwaben, Germany

6. Medizinische Klinik I, Abteilung Rhythmologie, Klinikum Aschaffenburg, Germany

7. Herz- und Gefaess-Klinik Bad Neustadt/Saale, Germany

*Introduction*: The implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) has become the treatment of choice for patients at risk for potentially lethal ventricular tachycardia and fibrillation. Despite this medical success, ICD patients often suffer from anxiety (up to 87 %), anxiety disorders (up to 38 %) and depression (up to 30 %). Routine medical care typically lacks the resources for appropriate psychosocial support. Limited mobility and low regional availability of self-help groups suggest internet-based support as an ideal supplement to traditional support models.

*Methods*: To investigate whether web-based support can help to prevent anxiety and depression and to improve quality of life in ICD-patients, we have developed ICD-Forum.de, a six-week internet based prevention program providing technical and medical information regarding the ICD and cognitive behavioral-therapy based self-help materials. Integrated in this program is a professionally moderated virtual self-help group. ICD-Forum.de has been evaluated on N = 119 ICD-patients in a multi-center, multi-disciplinary, half-open, part-randomized, controlled clinical trial. Demographic and medical variables and psychosocial well-being has been assessed at baseline, before and after treatment, and at 12-month follow-up in two groups (random assignment to treatment as usual [TAU] vs. TAU plus participation in ICD-Forum.de; stratification by age, sex, and ICD-indication).

*Results*: Comparison of data pre- to post-intervention (intent to treat analysis: ANCOVA with covariates preTx, age, sex, ICD-indication) revealed a significant improvement of psychosocial well-being (composite score of heart related anxiety, depression, quality of life) that improved further at follow up (12 months after baseline) in the intervention group as compared to the control group.

*Conclusion*: This is the first successful implementation of web-care for ICD-patients, resulting in a large effect on psychosocial well-being. We conclude that helping ICD-patients with low-cost web-based approaches is feasible and effective. This recommends integrating such an approach in routine care of ICD-patients.