

Table 1: Included studies – baseline data on trial participants and trial quality

Author & Year	Setting	Total number	Participants			Follow-up (weeks)	Quality criteria achieved ¹ (Max = 8)	Notes regarding design/quality
			Mean age (years)	% Male	Mean ejection fraction			
Blue 2001 ²³	UK	165	75.0	58%	-	52	8	
Bouvy 2003 ³³	Netherlands	152	69.7	66%	-	26	8	
Capomolla 2002 ³¹	Italy	234	56.0	84%	30.0%	52	4	No details of allocation concealment, outcome data from single source only, no clear primary outcome, no clear inclusion/exclusion criteria.
Cline 1998 ³⁴	Sweden	190	75.6	53%	34.0%	52	5	No details of allocation concealment, no clear primary outcome, ITT not specified. NB: Randomised consent procedure used. 16 intervention patients refused consent vs. 0 controls.
Cleland / Coletta 2002 ¹³	Europe	426	-	-	-	57	3	Abstract only available. No details of allocation concealment, ITT not specified, outcome data not clearly cross-checked, baseline comparability unclear, inclusion/exclusion criteria not specified
de Lusignan 2001 ²²	UK	20	-	-	-	52	3	No details of allocation concealment, outcome data from single source only, no clear primary outcome, ITT not specified, no data on baseline comparability.
Doughty 2002 ²⁴	New Zealand	197	73.0	60%	32.2%	52	8	Cluster RCT, small cluster size (mean = 1.5 patients/cluster), authors adjusted for effect of clustering and found no effect on results
Ekman 1998 ¹⁷	Sweden	158	80.3	58%	40.5%	26	6	Outcome data from single source only, no clear primary outcome
Gattis 1999 ²⁰	USA	181	67.2	68%	30%	24	6	No details of allocation concealment, ITT not specified
Goldberg 2003 ³⁵	USA	280	59.1	68%	22%	26	8	
Goodyer 1995 ¹²	UK	100	84.5	27%	-	13	2	Criteria for CHF diagnosis not specified, no details of allocation concealment, outcome data from single source only, no clear primary outcome, ITT not specified, follow-up < 6 months.

Table 1: Included studies – baseline data on trial participants and trial quality (cont)

Author & Year	Setting	Total number	Participants			Follow-up (weeks)	Quality criteria achieved ¹ (Max = 8)	Notes regarding design/quality
			Mean age (years)	% male	Mean ejection fraction			
Grancelli 2003 ²¹	Argentina	1518	65	71%	-	52 (mean)	7	Unclear how outcome data were gathered.
Holland 2004 ¹¹	UK	71	85.9	48%	-	26	6	Criteria for CHF solely determined by discharge diagnosis
Jaarsma 1999 ¹⁵	Netherlands	179	73.0	58%	34.4%	39	7	ITT not specified. NB: 7 subjects excluded post-randomisation.
Kasper 2002 ²⁵	USA	200	61.9	61%	27.3%	26	7	Criteria for diagnosis of CHF not specified
Krumholz 2002 ¹⁸	USA	88	73.8	57%	37.5%	52	6	No details of concealed allocation, groups appeared to differ at baseline
Laramee 2003 ³⁶	USA	287	70.7	54%	-	13	5	No mention of intention to treat, follow-up < 6 months, no details of concealed allocation
McDonald 2002 ³⁷	Ireland	98	69.0	66%	37.0%	12	5	No details of concealed allocation, outcome data from single source only, follow-up < 6 months
Naylor 2004 ²⁶	USA	239	76.0	43%	-	52	7	Validation of diagnosis of heart failure not specified
Philbin 2000 ²⁹	USA	1504	75.7	44%	39.6%	26	3	No concealed allocation, no clear data cross-checking, poor baseline comparability, inclusion/exclusion criteria not specified and diagnostic criteria for heart failure unclear.
Rainville 1999 ¹⁴	USA	34	70.0	50%	-	52	5	Outcome data from single source only, ITT not specified, groups appeared to differ at baseline. NB: 4 subjects excluded post-randomisation.
Rich 1993 ¹⁹	USA	98	79.3	41%	-	13	3	No details of concealed allocation, groups appeared to differ at baseline, outcome data from single source only, follow-up < 6m, ITT not specified. NB: subjects randomised 2:1 intervention vs. control
Rich 1995 ¹⁶	USA	282	78.6	37%	42.5%	13	5	Groups appeared to differ at baseline, outcome data from single source only, follow-up < 6 months

Table 1: Included studies – baseline data on trial participants and trial quality (cont)

Author & Year	Setting	Total number	Participants			Follow-up (weeks)	Quality criteria achieved ¹ (Max = 8)	Notes regarding design/quality
			Mean age (years)	% male	Mean ejection fraction			
Riegel 2002 ⁸	USA	358	73.9	49%	42.7%	26	5	Criteria for diagnosis of CHF not specified, no details of concealed allocation, not analysed by ITT. NB: cluster RCT. No adjustment for clustering but cluster size small (mean = 1.3 patients/cluster). 57 subjects excluded post-randomisation as physician refused intervention (29) or patient withdrew (28)
Serxner 1998 ²⁸	USA	109	71.0	48%	-	26	2	Criteria for diagnosis of CHF not specified, no details of concealed allocation, no data on baseline comparability, no clear primary outcome, outcome data from single source only, ITT not specified.
Stewart 1998 ³²	Australia	97	75.0	48%	38.5%	26	7	Outcome data from single source only. NB: part of larger study of elderly hospital discharges (total n=762).
Stewart 1999 ³⁸	Australia	200	75.7	62%	37.0%	26	7	Outcome data from single source only
Stromberg 2003 ³⁹	Sweden	106	77.5	61%	-	52	6	Unclear if allocation concealed beyond use of sealed envelopes, outcome data from single source only.
Varma 1999 ³⁰	UK	83	75.9	41%	-	52	3	No details of concealed allocation, groups appear to differ at baseline, no clear primary outcome, outcome data from single source only, ITT not specified.
Weinberger 1996 ²⁷	USA	504	62.8	99%	-	26	7	Criteria for diagnosis of CHF not specified. NB: this was sub-group within a large study also recruiting patients with diabetes or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (total subjects= 1396)

CHF, congestive heart failure; ITT, intention to treat; RCT, randomised controlled trial.

¹Quality criteria used: concealed allocation; use of an intention to treat analysis; outcome data confirmed by using at least two sources; an explicit statement of inclusion or exclusion criteria; baseline comparability between groups; a clearly defined primary outcome; clear diagnostic criteria for heart failure; and length of follow-up (where 6 months and over was considered adequate).