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**INFORMATION GAPS: A GROUP PERSPECTIVE ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF HEART FAILURE**

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A thesis presented in partial requirements for the degree of Master of
Philosophy

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New Zealand

January 2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completion of this study would not have been possible without the help and support of many people. Their generosity and encouragement has been a constant source of inspiration for me. I acknowledge with special thanks the following:

The twelve participants in the study, who shared their experiences with me.

To Antoinette McCallin who supervised me during this project I extend special thanks for her time, patience, perseverance guidance and expertise.

My grateful appreciation to Ann Giles who as a friend supported, encouraged, and offered expert advice as well as positive practical help. It was due to Ann's enthusiastic approach to research that I finally got underway.

To my parents, Jeanette and Murray Reed who offered encouragement and support through the more difficult moments.

Jan Rodgers with whom I did the masters level papers, who sadly was unable to undertake supervision. Her initial enthusiasm inspired me to finish the course.

Finally to Ruth Palmer who provided frank discussions when required, and for her unique, and inspiring spirit which is sadly missed.

ABSTRACT

Heart failure is a complex condition that incurs considerable socio-economic burden, and poor prognosis. Careful management of the syndrome is required if a patient is to have a reasonable quality of life. Health professionals generally acknowledge that there is a need to improve care of patients with heart failure and that there are treatment gaps between the recommended therapies, and the care patients are actually receiving.

This pilot study used the grounded theory approach to discover the main concerns, and how they are continually resolved, of a group that manage heart failure. It is argued that **information gaps** are present in the management of heart failure. It was demonstrated that when there is an *absence of a cohesive group*, occurring under conditions of *changing funding structures* within the context of *boundaries merging*, it is often necessary to *alert others*. The alerting of others is how the group continually resolve the **information gaps**. However, when people are not alerted, are *left out of the loop*, poor symptom management is more likely to occur, and **information gaps** are perpetuated. The loop in this study is comprised of information relating to heart failure and the members who both send and receive it. Indeed, if the loop is able to be activated so that people are *in the loop* information is shared and the chances for better heart failure management are more likely. The impact of effective heart failure management for the patients means that although heart failure as a chronic disease is limiting, it is still possible in many cases, to improve quality of life and longevity. The findings of this study also suggest that there is a need for nurses as health professionals to move towards ways to reduce information gaps and improve access to information, and it is suggested that case management and information systems are the ways to do so.

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