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Contacts: Tracy Hampton • (312) 339-9067 • thampton@nasw.org
Bob Henkel • (202) 557-8360 • bhenkel@asn-online.org

MANY KIDNEY FAILURE PATIENTS HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT PURSUING KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION

Older patients, women, and less educated individuals have more concerns

Highlights

- Among new dialysis patients, the most frequently cited concerns were that patients felt they were doing fine on dialysis and felt uncomfortable asking someone to donate a kidney.
- Older age was linked with having high health-related or psychosocial concerns, as was being a woman, being less educated, and having more comorbid illnesses.
- Patients having such concerns had less than half the chance of getting listed for a transplant than those without them.

A kidney transplant is the best treatment option for patients with kidney failure.

Washington, DC (September 11, 2014) — Concerns about pursuing kidney transplantation are highly prevalent among kidney failure patients, particularly older adults and women, according to a study appearing in an upcoming issue of the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* (CJASN). Reducing these concerns may help decrease disparities in access to transplantation.

There are thousands of patients with kidney failure who lack access to kidney transplantation, and disparities persist in terms of race, age, sex, and other patient characteristics. To improve access, it's important to understand the sources of these disparities. For example, are clinicians not referring their patients for transplantation, or are patients' concerns causing them to avoid transplantation despite appropriate referrals?

Dorry Segev, MD, PhD (Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health) and his colleagues conducted a study to understand the concerns and perceived barriers that dialysis patients have about pursuing transplantation, and what patient characteristics are associated with such concerns.

Among 348 adults who recently initiated dialysis and were recruited from 26 free-standing dialysis centers around Baltimore between 2009 and 2012, the most frequently cited concerns were that participants felt they were doing fine on dialysis (68.4%) and felt

uncomfortable asking someone to donate a kidney (29.9%). Older age was independently associated with having high health-related or psychosocial concerns, as was being a woman, being less educated, and having more comorbid illnesses. Patients having such concerns had less than half the chance of getting listed for a transplant than those without them. Having never seen a kidney specialist before initiating dialysis was linked with high psychosocial concerns.

“The study is an important reminder that major disparities still exist in access to kidney transplantation, and it sheds some light on the mechanism of these disparities,” said Dr. Segev. “Knowing that older patients, women, and less educated individuals have more concerns about transplantation, and as a result are less likely to seek transplantation, should inspire the development of educational programs to address these concerns and help patients make the most informed treatment decisions possible.”

Study co-authors include Megan Salter PhD, Natasha Gupta, BS, Elizabeth King, MD, Karen Bandeen-Roche, PhD, Andrew Law ScM, Mara McAdams-DeMarco, PhD, Lucy Meoni, ScM, Bernard Jaar, MD, MPH, Stephen Sozio, MD, MHS, Wen Hong Linda Kao, PhD, and Rulan Parekh, MD, MS.

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The article, entitled “Health-Related and Psychosocial Concerns about Transplantation among Patients Initiating Dialysis,” will appear online at <http://cjasn.asnjournals.org/> on September 11, 2014.

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Facebook: A simple and inexpensive urine test routinely done in family doctors' offices can identify people who are silently undergoing rapid kidney function decline, says a study in the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*. The test could lead to earlier and more effective treatments, lowering risks of kidney failure and death. Some 60 million people globally have chronic kidney disease, but many don't know it, as they have no symptoms until later stages of disease.

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