



PRESS RELEASE

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STUDY EXAMINES ANTIBODY RESPONSE TO COVID-19 VACCINATION IN PATIENTS WITH KIDNEY FAILURE

Highlight

- Most patients with kidney failure who were undergoing hemodialysis developed a positive antibody response after being vaccinated for COVID-19, but their response was lower than that of individuals without kidney disease.

Washington, DC (April 6, 2021) — In a recent study, most patients with kidney failure who were undergoing hemodialysis developed a substantial antibody response following the vaccination with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against COVID-19, but it was significantly lower than that of individuals without kidney disease. The findings will appear in an upcoming issue of *CJASN*.

Individuals with kidney failure who are receiving dialysis treatments have a higher risk of experiencing severe COVID-19 if they become infected with the virus that causes the disease. Therefore, vaccination may be especially important for these patients; however, they also tend to mount reduced immune responses against infections and vaccinations. To assess their responses to COVID-19 vaccination, a team led by Moshe Shashar MD (Laniado Hospital and Tel-Aviv Medical Center, Israel) compared antibody responses following vaccination with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in 56 patients on maintenance hemodialysis vs. 95 healthcare workers.

All of the healthcare workers developed a positive antibody response to the virus that causes COVID-19, compared with 96% of participants in the dialysis group. The average antibody levels in patients on dialysis were significantly lower than those among healthcare workers. Also, there was a significant inverse correlation of age and antibody levels in both groups.

Although the findings are preliminary and warrant further clarifications and verifications, they suggest that COVID-19 vaccination doses and schedules should be reconsidered for individuals with kidney failure who are on dialysis.

“I believe our findings should encourage patients with kidney failure treated with dialysis to be vaccinated as soon as vaccination becomes available for them, while we as a care givers should explore ways to enhance its efficacy in our patients,” said Dr. Shashar.

Study co-authors include Ayelet Grupper, MD, Nechama Sharon, MD, Talya Finn, MBBS, Regev Cohen, MD, Meital Israel, MA, Amir Agbaria, MD, Yoav Rechavi BMedSc, Idit F. Schwartz, MD, Doron Schwartz, MD, and Yonatan Lellouch, PhD.

Disclosures: A. Grupper and I.F. Schwartz report employment with Tel-Aviv Medical Center. M. Israel and Y. Rechavi report employment with Laniado hospital. D. Schwartz reports employment with Sourasky Medical Center. The remaining authors have nothing to disclose.

The article, titled “Humoral Response to the Pfizer BNT162b2 Vaccine in Patients Undergoing Maintenance Hemodialysis,” will appear online at <http://cjasn.asnjournals.org/> on April 6, 2021, doi: 10.2215/CJN.03500321.

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