



NEWS

European Renal Association -
European Dialysis and Transplant Association

NDT Study shows: 34% of English Dialysis Patients are Referred late, 67% of them have to be treated as an Emergency!

25 September 2014

Late referral to a nephrologist is still a big problem. A retrospective cohort study [1] of 3,928 incident dialysis patients in the English National Health Service showed that 34% of the patients had not been referred to a kidney care specialist 90 days before they had to start dialysis. Furthermore, the study group of Ian Blunt found out that 49% of the patients who had been referred late, had had regular contact with other hospital services before. This means that the chronic kidney disease had not been detected or, at least, had been dramatically underestimated by the general practitioners or doctors of other sub-specialties.

This is an alarming result, as Prof. Carmine Zoccali, NDT Editor-in-Chief, comments: "With chronic kidney disease, a common comorbidity such as diabetes or hypertension, kidney function declines slowly, but continuously – often without any symptoms. However we now have data that shows how an early referral into nephrologic care can slow the progression of the disease and could save a patient from being dependent on dialysis for several month or even years; besides, this would save the health care systems high costs."

Furthermore the study also shows that this late referral can involve a series of medical complication: 67% of the patients who had not seen a nephrologist 90 days before they started dialysis, received their first dialysis as an emergency kind of treatment. The illness came as a shock to the patient who had to cope with the fact to be dependent on dialysis for the rest of their lives from one day to the next.

C. Zoccali points out: "Late referral is not only an English problem, it is common in nearly all European countries. It means that our patients have no chance to undergo preventive measures and improve their outcomes. Therefore ERA-EDTA is fighting for a higher awareness among the general population, but also our colleagues of other medical specialties, of chronic kidney disease. The study of Blunt et al. has shown once again that it is high time to improve the prevention and early detection of chronic kidney disease."



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[1] Blunt Ian et al. Pre-dialysis hospital use and late referrals in incident dialysis patients in England: a retrospective cohort study. NDT 2014; epub ahead of print Sep 12, 2014.

Interested to read the full paper? Just send a copy of your press card to press@era-edta.org and ask for the pdf.

About ERA-EDTA

With more than 6,600 members, the ERA-EDTA ("European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association") is one of the biggest nephrology associations worldwide and one of the most important and prestigious European Medical Associations. It supports basic and clinical research in the fields of clinical nephrology, dialysis, renal transplantation and related subjects. The ERA-EDTA supports a number of studies as well as research groups and has founded a special "Fellowship Programme" for young investigators as well as grant programmes. In order to involve young nephrologists in all activities of the ERA-EDTA the Council decided to create a Young Nephrologists' Platform (YNP). Besides, it has established various research networks and different working groups to promote the collaboration of nephrologists with other medical disciplines (e.g. cardiology, immunology). Furthermore, a "European Renal Best Practice" (ERBP) advisory board has been established by the ERA-EDTA to draw up and publish guidelines and position statements. Another important goal of the ERA-EDTA is education: several series of CME-courses as well as the annual congress offer an attractive scientific programme to cover the need of continuous medical education for doctors working in the fields of nephrology, dialysis and transplantation. The association's journals, NDT (Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation) and CKJ (Clinical Kidney Journal), are currently the leading nephrology journals in Europe. The ERA-EDTA Registry is a large epidemiologic database comparing countries by assessing nephrology practice throughout Europe. Finally, ERA-EDTA is member of the European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA), a consortium of renal societies that actively interacts with the European Parliament. For more information please visit www.era-edta.org