

Copenhagen, May 18, 2018

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD): Is there a cure on the horizon?

The Congress of the ERA-EDTA (European Renal Association and European Dialysis and Transplant Association) will be jointly held with the Danish Society for Nephrology (DNS) in Bella Center from May 24–27, 2018. Numerous exciting study results will be presented. Congress President, Prof. Dr. Bo Feldt-Rasmussen, Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen, highlights the innovative character of his specialty: “Nephrology was the first discipline that was able to replace a vital human organ over a long time and I am optimistic that a cure for chronic kidney disease can be found, hopefully within the next two or three decades.” The fact that all renal diseases have a common final pathway to end-stage renal disease contributes to the development of future treatments and to help find a cure.

The 55th Congress of the ERA-EDTA (European Renal Association and European Dialysis and Transplant Association) will be jointly held with the Danish Society for Nephrology (DNS) in the Bella Center from May 24–27, 2018. More than 8,000 nephrologists (specialist physicians for kidney disease and hypertensive disorders) are expected to attend. The world’s second-biggest nephrology congress covers the full range of topics in this specialty, with discussions focusing not only on developments in the field of renal replacement therapy (dialysis and transplantation), but also on the latest findings on the causes, development and treatment of different kidney diseases, on the management of various concomitant diseases in patients with chronic renal failure, as well as interdisciplinary issues at the interfaces between nephrology & cardiology, nephrology & hypertensiology and nephrology & diabetology, in particular. A special highlight: One of the four plenary lectures will be delivered by Professor Klaus Ølgaard, University of Copenhagen, on “New paradigms of the kidney – vascular bone axis in chronic kidney disease”.

A special focus of the Congress, according to its President, Prof. Dr. Bo Feldt-Rasmussen, Copenhagen, is on the prevention of chronic kidney disease (CKD), which is often a consequence of diabetes mellitus and high blood pressure in the second half of people’s lives. “Demographic change has been confronting us with a challenge here, especially since the number of those with diabetes and/or high blood pressure has risen. 320.545 Danes are diagnosed with diabetes today and according to the “Diabetesforeningen” it will already be 430.000 Danes in 2030 [1].” Nevertheless, the number of patients who suffer from diabetic

nephropathy, a kidney impairment caused by diabetes, has remained stable in Denmark [2]. "This shows that our efforts of improving prophylactic treatment of chronic kidney disease pay off! It is especially important to protect high-risk patients against terminal renal failure. This is not only in the interests of those affected, but also of the national healthcare systems, given that dialysis is a relatively cost-intensive therapy." 5,190 patients were dependent on renal replacement therapy (dialysis or transplantation) in Denmark in 2015 [3].

So far, there is no cure for most kidney diseases, to stay alive ongoing treatment is required. Of course, the underlying goal of many current research projects is to find a cure. "This sounds very ambitious, especially, because patients lose kidney function due to many different diseases. But there seems to be one pathomechanism underlying many of them: Once you have kidney damage of a certain severity, the kidney continues to lose function, regardless of which disease made the initial attack." It seems that all kidney diseases have a common final pathway to end-stage renal disease, which is tubulointerstitial fibrosis. Many research initiatives are tackling this phenomenon from all angles and are trying to understand its pathomechanism, which is essential for finding novel therapeutic strategies. A milestone that will be presented at the congress in Copenhagen are two rather new treatment principles in type 2 diabetic patients, both of which reduce cardiovascular mortality and progression of diabetic kidney disease.

New techniques including molecular biology and genomic medicine - which both investigate the smallest details of the physiology and function of the human body - will be discussed at the congress. Besides, big data and genome-based medicine bring new insights and opportunities towards a more "personalized" treatment in nephrology. "I am convinced that a cure for chronic kidney disease can be found, hopefully within the next two or three decades. Nephrology is a very innovative specialty. It was the first discipline that was able to replace a vital human organ over a long time (for years and decades) and, thus, to enable patients to live although they suffer from an irreversible and lethal organ failure."

Journalists are invited to attend the congress. A press conference will take place on Friday, May 25, 09.30 – 10.30 am (Room 19/Bella Center).

[1] <https://diabetes.dk/diabetesforeningen/in-english/facts-about-diabetes-in-denmark.aspx>

[2] Heaf J. Current trends in European renal epidemiology. Clin Kidney J. 2017 Apr;10(2):149-153

[3] ERA-EDTA Registry. Annual Report 2015.

<https://www.era-edta-reg.org/files/annualreports/pdf/AnnRep2015.pdf>

About ERA-EDTA

With more than 7,500 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. It also 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 its activities, ERA-EDTA has created the "Young Nephrologists' Platform" (YNP), a very active committee whose board includes members who are 40 years old or younger. In addition, it has established various 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 was established by the ERA-EDTA to draw up and publish guidelines and position statements. Another important goal of the ERA-EDTA is education: The series of CME courses combined with the annual congress offer an attractive scientific programme to cover the need for 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; furthermore NDT-Educational is the online educational journal of the society, with free access for all users, as well as being a very important and useful feature of the NDT-Educational "Literature Review". The ERA-EDTA Registry is a large epidemiologic database comparing countries by assessing nephrology practices throughout Europe. ENP, the European Nephrology Portal, is the latest new initiative of ERA-EDTA, where all those interested in the activities of the Society can find everything that is happening, all in one place. Finally, ERA-EDTA is a member of the European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA), a consortium of patients, nurses and foundations relating to renal issues that actively interacts with the European Parliament. For more information, please visit www.era-edta.org