

Stress and Adherence during the COVID-19 Pandemic in an Inner-City Population of Dialysis Patients: Relationship to Age

Introduction: It has been reported that older pts adapt better to dialysis than younger pts. We investigated in response by age to various stressors encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic in a population of inner-city dialysis patients.

Methods: A random sample of 32 dialysis patients were asked about their fluid intake, general attitudes towards medical recommendations, and changes in their wellbeing due to COVID19.

Results: Mean age was 56.8 ± 18.2 years. 15 pts (46.9%) were <60 yrs (younger) and 17 (53.1%) were ≥ 60 yrs (older). Mean dialysis time was 88.0 ± 104.0 months. There were 20 (62.5%) male, 29 (90.6%) identified as black, and 18 (56%) had a high school diploma or less. 7% (1) of older and 46% (6) of younger pts reported "some of the time" or "never" rather than "most of the time" when asked how often they followed the fluid restriction recommendations ($p=0.034$). 29% (4) of younger pts reported fluid restrictions were difficult to follow, vs. none of the older pts ($p=0.037$). 33% (5) of younger pts reported "poor" or "average" when asked about wellbeing prior to the pandemic and 100% (15) of older patients reported "good" ($p=0.05$). When asked to rate their stress level over the last year, 64% (9) of younger pts reported being somewhat or very stressed and 79% (11) of older pts reported a little or not stressed ($p=0.015$). 29% (4) of younger pts stated they sometimes work well with their provider and 100% (15) of older patients stated always ($p=0.026$).

Conclusion: In our population: 1. Younger pts were less adherent to fluid restriction and found them more difficult to follow. 2. Older pts were more likely to report feeling good prior to the pandemic and were less stressed following it. 3. Older pts were more likely to report a good relationship with their provider. 4. Younger pts may need more support through the pandemic as they appear to be coping less well, feel less connected, and are less able to follow important dietary restrictions.