



Leading European Nephrology

NEWS

European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

A Challenge for European Healthcare Systems

June 1, 2017

About 5%-10% of the European population is affected by chronic kidney disease (CKD). These people have lost some of their kidney function and are at high risk of becoming dependent on renal replacement therapies (dialysis or transplantation). A frequent misconception is that the CKD population is identical to those on dialysis. However, dialysis patients represent only 1 to 2% of the population with CKD. In the community of Madrid, about 6,400 people are living on renal replacement therapy. But with more than 6 million inhabitants, 300,000 to 600,000 people suffer from CKD!

This is due, on the one hand, to demographic trends – people are becoming older, and loss of renal function is a symptom of old age. Yet demographic trends alone do not explain an upward trend in chronic kidney disease (CKD). Several other conditions are linked to increased incidence of CKD, e.g. diabetes mellitus, hypertension, smoking, ageing, and obesity. All subjects having these characteristics should not only be adequately treated for their primary condition, but should also be regularly screened and treated specifically for their kidney disease.

Yet CKD is still frequently neglected as a health hazard, despite being epidemiologically and economically important. The increasing prevalence of chronic kidney disease is also a growing problem for the healthcare economy. The annual costs incurred for a dialysis patient in Europe are estimated at approx. EUR 80,000.

One reason for the neglect of CKD might well be that the 'alarm signals' for CKD are few, unless it has progressed to an advanced stage, when preventive measures have no further impact. An even more important problem is the lack of awareness among the general population and even among the medical community of the risks of kidney disease.

The only options for reducing the dialysis population, or at least for keeping it stable over the long term, are to improve the early detection of chronic kidney disease and to further promote kidney transplantation. 'We see enormous potential in the field of early detection, especially, because it can stop the disease from advancing, or slow its progress at least', explains Professor Jorge B. Cannata-Andía, Congress President of the 54th Congress of the European Renal Association - European Dialysis and Transplantation Association (ERA-EDTA) that takes place from 3 June to 6 June, 2017, in Madrid.



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To raise the awareness for kidney disease and to enhance CKD prevention is one of the declared aims of the ERA-EDTA, the European society for nephrologists. The association works towards sensitizing the population and policymakers to the problem of CKD. "It is important that CKD is perceived more strongly as a problem for individual health and for healthcare economies, and that preventive measures are taken quickly and across the board. Because what we are now seeing in terms of CKD prevalence may only be the tip of the iceberg", says Prof. Andrzej Więcek, President of the ERA-EDTA. "There is an urgent need to take action!"

About ERA-EDTA

With almost 7,000 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 activities ERA-EDTA has the Young Nephrologists' Platform (YNP), a very active committee whose board includes members who are 40 years old or younger. Besides, 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: 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; furthermore NDT-Educational is the online educational journal, open for free to all uses, of the Society as well as the very important and useful feature of NDT-Educational "Literature Review". The ERA-EDTA Registry is a large epidemiologic database comparing countries by assessing nephrology practice throughout Europe. ENP, the European Nephrology Portal, is the latest new initiative of ERA-EDTA: here all those interested in the activities of the Society can find everything that is done, all in one place! Finally, ERA-EDTA is member of the European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA), a consortium of patients, nurses, foundations all related to renal issues that actively interacts with the European Parliament. For more information please visit www.era-edta.org