

Quality Improvement by Introducing Long-Term Care Outreach HD Program During COVID Pandemic

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Background: Dialysis patients with several comorbidities tend to be hospitalized frequently.^{1,2} During the pandemic, long-term care (LTC) residents experienced social isolation, especially dialysis patients with multiple hospital admissions. The LTC outreach hemodialysis (HD) initiative (LTC-HD) improved the quality of life for this cohort.

Methods: Patients' social engagement and aggressive behaviour were reviewed in order for us to understand the impact of the LTC-HD initiative. Six patients out of 27 were selected by convenient sampling technique. We utilized the Resident Assessment Instrument-Minimum Data Set 2.0 (RAI-MDS 2.0 © interRAI Corporation, 2017),³ to assess the cognitive status, mental health, and quality of life (QoL) of these patients upon admission and on a quarterly basis. At least three assessments utilizing the Index of Social Engagement (ISE) and Aggressive Behaviour Scale (ABS) were conducted per patient from May 2020 to May 2021. A higher ISE score denotes a higher level of social engagement, whereas a lower ABS score indicates a lower aggressive behaviour. (RAI-MDS 2.0 © interRAI Corporation, 2017).

Results: Patients' social engagement improved in this cohort based on the ISE. Thirty-three percent and 50% of the patients exhibited one-score and two-score improvement in the ISE, respectively. One patient demonstrated a decline in social engagement related to hospitalization due to a hip fracture. Half of the patients showed aggressive behaviour on the first assessment (high ABS). Seventeen percent of patients exhibited improvement in their aggressive behaviours. One-third of patients become aggressive following pressure ulcer, fracture, and pain.

Conclusions: Considering social isolation in LTC patients during the pandemic, a decline in social engagement was expected. Providing dialysis in LTC facilitates lower environmental change and reduces the burden of transportation to residents. By maintaining caregiver assignment for the same patient, the therapeutic relationship with residents improved. As a result, the primary care model led to improved social engagement and QoL.

REFERENCES

1. Banerjee, D. (2020). The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on elderly mental health. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 35(12), 1466–1467. <https://doi.org/10.1002/gps.5320>