

Information on End Stage Renal Failure Palliative Treatment

Introduction

End Stage Renal failure (ESRF) refers to the severe dysfunction of kidneys due to permanent kidney tissue damage. As the kidney fails, metabolic wastes and fluid accumulating in the body increasingly affect body functions. While dialysis or kidney transplantation are the ways to prolong a patient's life, it is associated with some discomfort or risks. The risk and benefit assessment may be very complicated in patients with multiple co-morbid conditions such as malignancy or advanced heart or lung diseases.

During the advance care planning process, health care professionals should facilitate the patient (and family) to arrive at an informed decision, based on the patient's own value, on the management of ESRF. The potential benefits of dialysis or kidney transplantation should be considered alongside their physical, psychological, and social burdens. Comprehensive palliative care that aims at minimizing patient's suffering through trans-disciplinary, holistic care may be more appropriate in some patients through pharmacological and non-pharmacological means.

Symptoms of ESRF

1. Nausea and vomiting
2. Loss of appetite
3. Itchiness
4. Generalized or lower torso weakness
5. Muscle cramps
6. Dizziness
7. Confusion
8. Decreasing urine output
9. Swelling of the eye lids or legs
10. Shortness of breath
11. High blood pressure
12. Pain

Notes for the patient and his/her family

In general, patients should:

1. Understand palliative treatment focuses on physical, psychological, social, and spiritual care. It aims at holistic care with symptom minimization.
2. understand the palliative care team strives to work alongside the patient and his/her family through the disease trajectory.
3. try to be compliant to pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapy.
4. promptly inform the palliative care team of any discomfort.

Remark

Information herein is for general reference only. There are wide variations in symptoms, clinical course, and treatment-related complications. For further information, please consult your medical professional.