

PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CKD PATIENTS ATTENDING AN ADVANCED KIDNEY CARE CLINIC FOR THE FIRST TIME

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INTRODUCTION & AIMS

Chronic kidney disease at stages 4 and 5 can often be associated with a greater symptom burden and more restrictions to individuals' daily functioning.

In the UK, patients at these stages are routinely referred to an 'Advanced Kidney Care' (AKC) or 'Low Clearance Clinic'. In addition to having to adjust to a new team and pathway (e.g. more frequent hospital appointments), patients and families are also called to make significant decisions about their future, sometimes facing the prospect of long-term dialysis and/or transplantation.

Despite this being a significant 'transition', little is known about the potential physical and psychosocial difficulties experienced by this population.

The present study aimed to:

- Explore the physical and psychosocial difficulties associated with progression of chronic kidney disease to stages 4 and 5
- Look at individual factors such as age, gender, ethnicity that could be associated with such difficulties.

METHODS

Individuals referred to the AKC clinic at St George's Hospital- London, between 2012 and 2013 were identified and asked to complete a self-report questionnaire during their first appointment to the clinic.

The questionnaire, developed by Dr J Cove, consultant renal psychologist, included:

- Physical and psychological symptoms (low mood and anxiety)
- Patients' understanding of their condition
- Overall ability to adjust to it and make decisions about their future treatment.

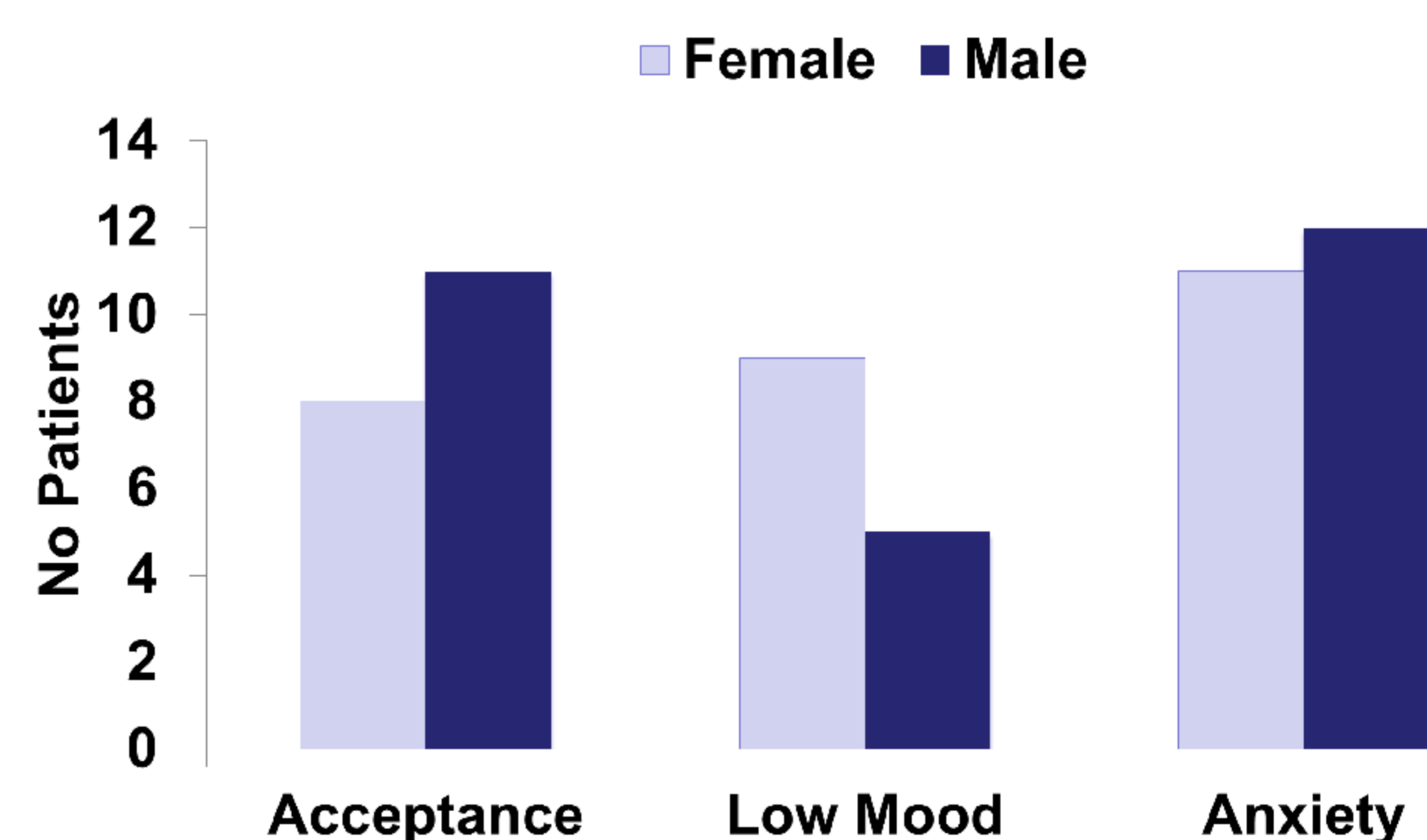
Completed questionnaires were collected at the end of the clinic and data was analysed using SPSS vs 22.

RESULTS

43 patients completed the questionnaire (56% men, median age= 67 years).

- Skin problems and tiredness were the most commonly reported physical symptoms.
- 54% reported feeling anxious in the past month and a third reported low mood.
- 53% reported difficulties accepting their condition and making decisions about the future.
- Women seemed more likely to report low mood whereas men were more likely to report difficulties accepting their illness
- No differences between women and men in anxiety

Complaints	Yes	No
Skin problems	25	17
Breathing problems	21	21
Tiredness	26	15
Problems taking medication	5	37
Problems with diet	13	33



CONCLUSIONS

- The prevalence of symptoms of low mood and anxiety in the present sample was higher than what would be found in the general population (ONS, 2013).
- A significant proportion of people struggle to come to terms with their condition and experience emotional difficulties, particularly anxiety.
- Increased anxiety among patients could be linked to the uncertainty surrounding their future, poor understanding or information about their illness as well as having to face important decisions with respect to future treatments.
- Findings highlight the importance of focusing on potential adjustment difficulties and signs of psychological distress, in addition to the medical needs of this population.
- This could mean offering routine psychological screening to all patients during their first visit to the AKC clinic so that those at risk of experiencing psychological difficulties can be promptly identified and referred for more specialist psychological input.

