

KIDNEY DIALOGUE: AN ADDED VALUE

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Introduction

In 2005 the medical social workers began to provide information sessions for patients with ESRD. These sessions are being organized in addition to the individual custom information sessions of kidney failure patients, and are called 'NierDialoog/KidneyDialogue'.

The sessions take place in the evening and have a dual purpose. On one hand it's for informing patients, their relatives and other interested people. On the other it's for peer support. Also the local patient association was searching for a way to get in contact with the patients of the Maastad Ziekenhuis.

Methods

After the year plan is made by the social workers, the workgroup will determine the topics for every single evening. Everyone who needs to be involved will be invited, Nephrologist, (kidney failure) nurses, dieticians, the local patient association, experience experts; (former) patients who underwent different treatment modalities.

Patients are invited for each evening. Also nursing homes, home care associations and other hospitals are invited so they can notify their ESRD patients or other people interested in the Kidney Dialogue. We started out with 5 evening sessions per year, once every two months. Each evening has one topic. Several issues have been addressed during these evenings such as: transplantation and donation, different types of dialysis, nutrition on dialysis, vacation as ESRD or dialysis patient and sexuality. At the request of the management we later added a 6th evening.

Results

Every evening there are between 50 and 80 visitors. Sometimes just the patient and the partner, sometimes a whole family. The number of visitors varies with each topic. Visitors find it very convenient to be given the opportunity to receive information again and to be able to ask questions to the (experience) experts. It's meaningful for them to hear how other patients experience the treatments and what they think are the advantages and disadvantages. It is also indicated by the visitors that they find it very pleasant to be able to meet other patients.

Conclusions

After more than 10 years of Kidney Dialogue, it has proven its value to our patients. It is an important way for the nephrology and dialysis department to inform their patients in a complementary manner. It also gives the patients the opportunity to ask questions at the (experience) experts at a different time than in the outpatient room. The Maastad Ziekenhuis will definitely keep on organizing these evenings in the future and encourages other hospitals to consider a similar way of providing information and peer support to their patients.

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