

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT; EARLY GROUP EDUCATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF CKD PATIENTS

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Introduction

Despite evidence that pre-emptive renal transplantation offers the best treatment for patients with ESRD, many patients start with dialysis. They find it difficult to talk with relatives and friends about their illness and treatment options. Living kidney donation is frequently overlooked and carried out after a period of dialysis.

We hypothesized that timely education of family and friends of patients improves understanding, prevent misconceptions about future health status and stimulates discussion about LKD.

Methods

In 2008 the hospital social workers started to offer CKD patients a timely education of family and friends. They inform the patient about the possibilities of this education.

When the patient agrees they organize a gathering of all relatives and friends of the patient, preferably at his home.

The informative gathering involves in an intimate discussion about current and future health status of the patient and treatment modalities. Data of patient survival on dialysis, after LKD and deceased donor transplantation are given. Risks and benefits of LKD for recipient and donor are presented.

Results

Participating patients, relatives and friends welcomed the approach of family counseling. All felt improved mutual understanding and bonding within the family. All patients were relieved after the hospital social worker initiated discussion about LKD. Until May 2017 group education was given to 100 families of CKD patients of the Maasstad Ziekenhuis. Potential living kidney donors showed up in 75 cases.

Conclusions

Early group education of families and friends of patients with CKD leads to a better informed and understanding family and to an improved family bonding. Relatives consider living kidney donation and make pre-emptive transplantation possible. We recommend this education to all patients with CKD stage 3-4.

