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### **The Lived Experiences of the African American End-Stage Renal Disease Patient Receiving Hemodialysis**

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There have been numerous quantitative studies conducted with African Americans receiving hemodialysis. Until now, no other published qualitative studies have explored their perceptions and attitudes about support. This phenomenological study explored these perspectives using a purposive, volunteer sample of 16 adult African Americans. In-depth, in-person interviews using open-ended questions were audio-recorded and then transcribed and coded for thematic analysis. The key research questions centered on the roles of spirituality, health beliefs, and different social support systems used in coping with end-stage renal disease (ESRD). The health belief model was used as the conceptual framework of this study, based on an empirical phenomenology approach, which suggested that verbal interaction with participants provided first-construct perceptions from the individuals. Five major themes and twenty-three subthemes emerged; they included (a) nursing as a trusted profession, (b) family is not just biological, (c) prayer is a constant companion, (d) importance of health beliefs before and after diagnosis, and (e) quality of life as a mixed blessing. These findings call for increased awareness among health care providers on the need to be receptive to African Americans' spirituality, particularly in African Americans' coping with the daily rigors of hemodialysis. By understanding African Americans' perceptions about spirituality and fear related to hemodialysis, health care professionals can better identify changes in practice necessary in caring for this population and bring about a positive social change by integrating holistic best practices into the standardized care for this population suffering from ESRD.

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