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Successful Peritoneal Dialysis in Elderly Patients

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The average age on patients with end stage renal disease (ESRD) is steadily rising. Peritoneal dialysis (PD) therapy is not widely utilized in elderly population with ESRD. In 2005, we implemented the monthly 2-hour Kidney Seminar for patients diagnosed with chronic kidney disease (CKD). The seminar consists of multidisciplinary speakers: nephrologist, nephrology nurse, social worker and dietitian. Our elderly PD patients all attended the seminar where they learned the treatment options and they chose the peritoneal dialysis.

This abstract describes our experience with the elderly PD patients with an average age of 83 years. The main causes of ESRD were diabetes mellitus and hypertension. The elderly patients have been on peritoneal dialysis continuously for 124 months with no episode of peritonitis and the hospitalization rate of 3.8%. One out of four elderly patients is on self-care cyclical PD and the rest have care partners to partially assist with their dialysis. All the elderly patients have good residual function with weekly Kt/V range of 1.92-2.80. The average PD training for the elderly was for 14 days compared to 8 days with the younger PD patients. One patient received assistance with an interpreter to successfully teach care partner in Vietnamese. The elderly patients are seen every month at the PD clinic by the interdisciplinary team.

In conclusion, there are no age limits or requirements to perform PD. People are living longer and staying active and many elderly with ESRD are doing well on PD. Our experience showed our elderly patients are doing very well with no peritonitis episode since the initiation of PD and hospitalization rate of 3.8%. The elderly patients that are motivated can successfully do peritoneal dialysis at home with good supportive families, dedicated and compassionate home dialysis staff.

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