



AMERICAN NEPHROLOGY NURSES' ASSOCIATION

ANNA'S 43RD NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

APRIL 29-MAY 2, 2012

WALT DISNEY WORLD DOLPHIN, ORLANDO, FL

The Experience and Self-Management of Fatigue in Adult Hemodialysis Patients

Ann E. Horigan, MSN, RN, PhD(c), Duke University School of Nursing, Harrisonburg, VA

Note: Research funded by ANNA Research Grant 2010

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to address an important gap in the knowledge regarding the experience and self-management of fatigue in this population in order to help dialysis patients' improve their quality of life through management of this symptom.

Approach: Participants selected for this study are those with ESRD who have been on dialysis longer than three months. Participants must experience fatigue, be mentally competent, be 21 years of age or older, and be able to read, speak, and understand English. Those who report a co-morbid condition that is not generally experienced in concert with ESRD, such as HIV, cancer, hepatitis, or multiple sclerosis, as well as those who self-report pregnancy will be excluded from this study. A longitudinal descriptive study design and qualitative descriptive methods were used in this study. An in-depth interview was conducted, followed by completion of a fatigue diary, and a second interview to follow up on the diary entries and perform member checks. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using manifest and latent content analysis.

Results: Preliminary data analysis indicates that fatigue is a most troublesome symptom for dialysis patients. Patients feel washed-out and drained of energy, particularly the day of dialysis. While the fatigue is anticipated, it is insidious in nature, and seems to catch patients off guard, as they find they are waking up, missing time, and not knowing they fell asleep until they wake up. Patients find the best solution is not to fight fatigue, as that wastes precious energy.

Implications: Nephrology nurses are in an excellent position to assess dialysis patients' needs regarding social support and time management that may help mitigate some of the effects of fatigue. Assisting patients to track the occurrence and level of fatigue and make sense of these patterns is also an important intervention that patients may find helpful in managing the effects of fatigue. Assisting patients to manage their fatigue can ultimately improve dialysis patients' quality of life.

Abstract selected for presentation at ANNA's 43rd National Symposium, Orlando, FL, 2012