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Health Disparities: Preventing Chronic Kidney Disease and its Progression Among BIPOC Communities

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Background: Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a significant public health problem. Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) continue to experience health disparities in access, burden, and care leading to poor health outcomes. BIPOC have some of the highest rates of diabetes and hypertension, the two leading causes of end-stage kidney disease (ESKD). Yet, CKD and ESKD represent one of the most notable examples of health disparities.

Problem: Disparities in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and morbidity of kidney disease among BIPOC communities are significant issues. Many disparities are related to the social determinants of health (SDOH) (e. g., health care access and quality, neighborhood and environment, economic stability, social and community context, and education access and quality).

Discussion: Kidney disease continues to manifest disparities and inequities in health care among BIPOC. The lack of access to care, food, safe drinking water, safety concerns in the community, and poor education and employment opportunities are linked to poor health outcomes. Numerous studies have shown that individuals with an increased number of negative SDOH have a higher incidence of CKD, increased progression to ESKD, inadequate dialysis treatment, reduced access to kidney transplantation, and poorer health outcomes.

Outcomes: Strategies for reducing and eliminating health care disparities must be implemented to help alleviate inequities among BIPOC. Given the high prevalence of disparities among BIPOC, the interprofessional team must practice cultural humility, recognize the impact of structural racism, consider strategies to increase awareness, understand the impact of SDOH, and promote diversity to improve health outcomes.

Conclusion: Nephrology nurses must increase their awareness and education of health disparities to address the many challenges of kidney disease to achieve health equity. Understanding the basics of SDOH, reducing health disparities, advancing health equities, and improving health outcomes can help to prevent CKD and its progression among BIPOC communities.

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