

LONG TERM NUTRITIONAL CHALLENGES

George Hartley, Freeman Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne

Nutrition is considered a corner stone in the management of individuals suffering chronic renal failure (CRF). Diet therapy can have an immediate beneficial effect in controlling the biochemical and fluid imbalances that result from declining renal function. However, nutrition also has a role in the longer-term management of patients.

Malnutrition is an area that provides long term challenges to the survival of patients. Nutritional intake frequently declines as renal failure advances and protein-energy malnutrition is a common finding amongst dialysis patients, contributing to the high rates of patient morbidity and mortality seen in CRF. In addition, malnutrition may also be associated with inflammation and the high rates of cardiovascular disease seen in end stage renal failure. Effective treatment might therefore be expected to significantly improve outcome.

Despite much research in the area, many questions remain regarding the management of malnutrition. How can it best be detected? How should nutritional status be monitored? What treatment options are available and which methods of nutritional support are effective? This presentation will examine these issues and suggest some practical guidelines for managing malnutrition in CRF.