

PATIENT ADAPTATION FROM DIALYSIS TO TRANSPLANTATION

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Problem Survival rates of renal transplants have increased with improvements and developments in technology. However a literature review highlights a lack of research to assess a patient's ability to cope and adapt to life with a transplant. Whilst being released from the harsh regimes associated with dialysis, transplantation creates its own problems associated with body image, changes in roles and identities, potentially leading to psychological and psychosocial issues.

Purpose. This study explored the expectations and coping strategies 10 individuals, 9 to 15 months after their first cadaveric renal transplant.

Design. A single centre qualitative study was designed using in-depth interviews. Data collection and analysis was based on a grounded theory approach.

Findings. Patients found themselves faced with obstacles such as, returning to work, re-establishing social contacts, establishing their roles within the family and overcoming the sense of vulnerability and dependency on the renal unit.

To be able to cope, overcome these obstacles and adapt, the key factors to address were employment, social support, the development self-care skills and reforming their self-identities.

Conclusion. This small study highlights the complexity of the adaptation process and the need for further extensive research. There is a need to develop a greater insight into the factors that can influence individuals' ability to adapt to transplantation. Pre transplantation factors that may influence the adaptation process include length of time on dialysis, type of dialysis and the level of biographical disruption.

Relevance. Health care professionals, when providing education need to be flexible in the need to tailor the education programme to each individual and be aware of the factors that can influence the outcome. Each patient will present with their own experiences and be faced with differing sets of obstacles. Enabling them to overcome these obstacles, thus facilitating a smooth transition will assist in improving their quality of life.