

## **EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING; A MAGAZINE FOR HAEMODIALYSIS PATIENTS**

**Short, P, Thomsett, K, Delaney, M**  
**East Kent Hospitals University Trust**

**INTRODUCTION:** Our Renal catchment spans 1400 square miles with 320 patients receiving haemodialysis (HD) across 1 main and 5 satellite units. The ever-increasing numbers of patients require regular dietetic review. We aim to provide a consistent message to all patients, however many (particularly those in satellite units) often feel isolated or unaware of their disease implications and renal services available to them.

**PURPOSE:** We produced a quarterly magazine for patients on HD, covering important aspects of renal failure, providing up to date information on the service, in a format which was accessible to most patients. Effectiveness was measured using a patient questionnaire.

**DESIGN:** The pilot magazine was produced for September 2008, and distributed at one HD satellite unit for feedback before its launch across all sites. The magazine objectives were to:

- Enlighten and amuse
- Provide a 'voice' for patients
- Provide a medium for all multidisciplinary team members to communicate with patients
- Allow patients to become familiar with the professionals looking after them

The September and December issue covered aspects including:

- News from the unit: discussing the department expansion (written by the Renal Matron)
- Dietary: healthy eating, phosphate restrictions and binders and low potassium recipes
- Psychological: coping with stress (written by the Renal counsellor)
- Exercise: exercise on dialysis and local exercise on referral schemes (written by the Renal Physiotherapist)
- General information: contact numbers for all health professionals, departments and wards.

A questionnaire was distributed amongst patients to assess effectiveness of the magazine.

**FINDINGS:** 100% of patients enjoyed reading the magazine. Style and format was scored at 88%. Knowledge on low phosphate diet and phosphate binders was improved in 100% of cases. All respondents found information such as recipes and news useful. 85% of patients utilised the exercise tips from the physiotherapist and 80% were keen to contribute to future editions.

**CONCLUSION:** The magazine has required both patient and multidisciplinary team involvement and has proven extremely popular. It has allowed all patients to receive consistent, up to date information on aspects of their disease, treatments and the services available. It will continue to be produced quarterly and circulated to home HD in addition to unit patients.

**RELEVANCE:** Providing a clear and consistent message to HD patients regarding their disease, treatment and services available proves problematic when there is large geographical spread between units. A magazine incorporating articles written by patients and the multidisciplinary team is effective in communicating a consistent message, educating and empowering the renal patient.