

PROVISION OF HOLIDAY DIALYSIS FOR HAEMODIALYSIS PATIENTS – REINVENTING THE HOLIDAY CARAVAN IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

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PROBLEM: The provision of holiday dialysis for haemodialysis patients is a challenge for most Renal Services in the U.K. The findings of the 2007 Dialysis Summit recognised that very few patients can gain access to “away from unit” dialysis within the U.K. However the National Service Framework for Renal Services emphasises the ability to dialyse away from home, for holidays, is important to kidney patients. Historically some units had dialysis caravans throughout the U.K providing holiday dialysis, though this had become less fashionable in recent times, along with a decline in the home haemodialysis population.

PURPOSE; To achieve “away from unit” dialysis U.K. units must allocate “spare” capacity to accommodate visiting patients, however for many dialysis services which are under pressure this is not practicable as they are working to full capacity.

Funding of holiday dialysis within the U.K. has implications for budget holders to cover the often variable costs which are not covered by reciprocal arrangements.

Our experience is that patients have found it difficult to access other units at peak holiday times and those that are in popular destinations often need to be booked months in advance.

DESIGN; This unit decided to redesign the holiday caravan for the 21st century. Patient involvement was fundamental to the success of this project. A consultation process was undertaken to assess patient/carer support for this venture and their location preference. A costing exercise was then carried out, funding agreed and a local trailer supplier identified to undertake the design and build. Sites were then contacted to determine whether they could accommodate this.

FINDINGS; The preferred site was North Wales, a popular tourist destination, easily accessible for patients to travel to and close enough to allow appropriate support and maintenance. Cost approx £50,000 with annual site fees.

Following a trial, 13 Home Haemodialysis patients were able to utilise this facility immediately. Future plans will extend this to enable unit based patients whom are medically fit, to use this facility, supported by familiar staff, for a few weeks each year.

CONCLUSION: The “Caravan” has been in situ since August 2008, and has already received positive feedback from patients using this. There is no extra cost to the unit for the provision of holiday dialysis, and it allows patients the freedom to use the facility as often as they want.

RELEVANCE: This project has alleviated the challenge of providing holiday dialysis within the U.K. for our haemodialysis patients and is a model that is readily transferable across the U.K.