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Despite the very high mortality of chronic dialysis patients little is known concerning clinical and laboratory variables in the months before death. Patients with low blood pressure measured pre dialysis have a marked increase in mortality examined annually over three years in contrast to higher BP levels. (Am J Kidney Diseases 48, 606, 2006).

In order to understand these changes we have studied blood pressure, albumin, other laboratory measurements and body weight in ~ 2400 patients who died over a three year period, in each case examining data for date of death backward from the previous 24 months.

In contrast to those who survived for 36 months blood pressures, albumin and other laboratory measures began to decline many months before death with an acceleration in the last 3 months. These changes varied between races and in relationship to causes of death.

These findings suggest an opportunity to perform diagnostic tests and intervene therapeutically in patients who appear to be of increased risk.