



Leading European Nephrology

NEWS

European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association

Prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease varies a lot across Europe!

4 January 2016

So far, it has been estimated that about 10% of the population in Europe is affected by chronic kidney disease (CKD). “It was quite surprising for us to learn that CKD prevalence varies a lot across European countries”, explains Prof. Dr. Kitty Jager, epidemiologist and managing director of the ERA-EDTA Registry. The working group around Dr. Katharina Brück from the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam performed an analysis of 19 general population studies from 13 different European countries. The results revealed a great heterogeneity across Europe: The prevalence of CKD, stage 1-5 varied between 3.31% in Norway and 17.3% in northeast Germany. Even if only the more severe stages of CKD were taken into account (CKD 3-5), the difference still remained substantial: The prevalence of these later stages was only 1.0% in central Italy, but 5.9% in northeast Germany. Of course, the prevalence of the advanced disease stages was lower than that of the early stages, because CKD causes a dramatic increase in general and cardiovascular mortality. The sad truth is that many CKD patients die before reaching end-stage renal disease when they are dependent on renal replacement therapy (dialysis, kidney transplantation).

But how can these differences in CKD prevalence among European countries be explained? “To be honest, this is a question we cannot answer yet. We know from this study that the difference in prevalence of CKD is largely independent of the prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, and obesity”, explains Prof. Dr. Jager. “There are many other factors that might contribute to it, e.g. human and environmental factors, genetic factors, the impact of public health policies on disease prevention and early detection – which vary a lot across Europe –, but the differences might also be due to heterogeneity of included studies with regard to laboratory methods and sample selection”.

As Prof. Dr. Ziad Massy, Paris, chairman of the ERA-EDTA Registry, points out, further epidemiological research would be necessary: “We know that CKD prevalence varies a lot across Europe, but obviously beyond traditional risk factors, other factors - either related to the patient or the environment - need to be determined. Therefore the work of the ERA-EDTA Registry is immensely important – we have to work actively to find out what puts us at risk of CKD.”



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About ERA-EDTA

With more than 7,000 members, the ERA-EDTA ("European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association") is one of the biggest nephrology associations worldwide and one of the most important and prestigious European Medical Associations. It supports basic and clinical research in the fields of clinical nephrology, dialysis, renal transplantation and related subjects. The ERA-EDTA supports a number of studies as well as research groups and has founded a special "Fellowship Programme" for young investigators as well as grant programmes. In order to involve young nephrologists in all activities of the ERA-EDTA the Council decided to create a Young Nephrologists' Platform (YNP). Besides, it has established various research networks and different working groups to promote the collaboration of nephrologists with other medical disciplines (e.g. cardiology, immunology). Furthermore, a "European Renal Best Practice" (ERBP) advisory board has been established by the ERA-EDTA to draw up and publish guidelines and position statements. Another important goal of the ERA-EDTA is education: several series of CME-courses as well as the annual congress offer an attractive scientific programme to cover the need of continuous medical education for doctors working in the fields of nephrology, dialysis and transplantation. The association's journals, NDT (Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation) and ckj (Clinical Kidney Journal), are currently the leading nephrology journals in Europe. The ERA-EDTA Registry is a large epidemiologic database comparing countries by assessing nephrology practice throughout Europe. Finally, ERA-EDTA is member of the European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA), a consortium of renal societies that actively interacts with the European Parliament. For more information please visit www.era-edta.org