

Afro-Caribbean patients with severe kidney disease at greater risk of hospitalisation from COVID-19

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Afro-Caribbean people with end stage kidney disease (ESKD) are more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 than other ethnicities, a study has found.

Research published today in *Nephrology* by King's College London and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust investigated the link between ethnicity and ESKD. They found patients of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity have a four-fold increased risk of being hospitalized with COVID-19 when compared to kidney transplant patients attending for routine care.

The study examined 39 people with diabetes related ESKD hospitalized with COVID-19 at Guy's and St Thomas' between March and April 2020. Of the hospitalized cohort, 73% of patients with a kidney transplant and 54% of haemodialysis patients were of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity. By comparison in patients attending hospital for routine care 18% of [kidney transplant](#) patients and 42% of haemodialysis patients are of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity.

The study concluded that ESKD is associated with a [high mortality rate](#) of 36% among severely ill patients hospitalized with COVID-19.

First author of the study, Dr. Antonella Corcillo from the School of Cardiovascular Medicine and Sciences at King's College London said: "There is very little information on the clinical features and outcomes in patients with ESKD admitted with COVID-19 in the UK. Patients with ESKD are at high risk of severe COVID-19 and often have a poor prognosis. The mortality rate of patients hospitalized, as they had very severe COVID-19, was high at 36% and similar to other recent studies internationally. We observed a disproportionately high prevalence of people of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity being hospitalized. We also saw that low blood glucose levels (hypoglycaemia) were common during hospitalization in this high-risk population and that adjustment of diabetes treatment was frequently required."

Senior author, Dr. Janaka Karalliedde from King's College London, said: "People with ESKD are a high-risk group and are vulnerable to severe COVID-19 infection. When we compared the prevalence of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity in [kidney transplant patients](#) admitted with severe COVID-19 to the population of transplant patients attending for routine care at our hospital we observed a more than a four-fold increase in patients of Afro-Caribbean origin being admitted with COVID-19. Further studies and research are urgently required to understand and explain this observation of disproportionate risk in patients of Afro-Caribbean origin. Our data also confirm that the management of diabetes in the setting of severe COVID-19 infection is very challenging and reinforce the importance of integrated multidisciplinary care and teamwork for patients with diabetes hospitalized with COVID-19."

Limitations of this study include its relatively [small sample size](#) and that, as it is a cross-sectional study, it is unable to identify causal relationships between [ethnicity](#) and severe COVID-19 outcomes.

More information: Antonella Corcillo et al, High prevalence of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity and hypoglycaemia in patients with diabetes and end stage renal disease hospitalized with COVID ?19, *Nephrology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/nep.13809](https://doi.org/10.1111/nep.13809)

Provided by King's College London

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