

Study examines symptoms before and after kidney transplantation

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Investigators have examined how various symptoms experienced by individuals with kidney failure are impacted by kidney transplantation. The findings will appear in an upcoming issue of *CJASN*.

People with [kidney failure](#) must often deal with numerous symptoms, such as fatigue, cramping, muscle soreness, numbness, dizziness, and

loss of appetite. Although [kidney](#) transplantation is the optimal treatment for restoring [kidney function](#) in [patients](#) with kidney failure, how it affects these symptoms is unclear.

To investigate, Mara A. McAdams-DeMarco, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins) and her colleagues analyzed information on 1,298 kidney transplant candidates and 521 kidney transplant recipients. "This is the first study to investigate how symptoms change before and after [kidney transplantation](#)," said Dr. McAdams-DeMarco.

Candidates reported being moderately to extremely bothered by fatigue (32%), dry skin (27%), muscle soreness (26%), and itchy skin (25%); 16% reported high and 21% reported very high symptom burden. During a median follow-up of 1.9 years, 12% of patients died on the waitlist, and those with very high symptom burden had a 67% higher risk. By the time patients were to receive transplants, 34% experienced an increased symptom burden while 42% remained unchanged.

Among kidney transplant recipients, patients experienced a lessening of symptoms following transplantation, with an overall 10% improvement in symptoms, followed by little further change from 3 months through 12 months after surgery. There were early (first 3 months) improvements in 9 of 11 symptoms, and itchy skin and fatigue had the greatest improvements.

"Our findings on the post-transplantation change in symptoms can help inform the important discussion surrounding post-transplant care, clarify the timeline for improvement, identify populations who are most likely to benefit, and promote patient-centered care," said Dr. McAdams-DeMarco.

An accompanying Patient Voice describes the perspective and experience of David Rodriguez, who was diagnosed with kidney failure

in 2008 at the age of 36 and then received a [kidney transplant](#) through a paired-exchange kidney donation.

More information: Kathryn Taylor et al, Kidney Disease Symptoms Before and After Kidney Transplantation, *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* (2021). [DOI: 10.2215/CJN.19031220](https://doi.org/10.2215/CJN.19031220)

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