

The Role of Social Workers and Nurses in Holistic Care for Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease

Salem Zamil Rashid Alshammri¹ Asma Zaal Obeid Alshammri¹ Sara Sweleem Ayad Alrshedy¹ Fayha Sahra Bejad Alharbi¹ Noof Sweleem Ayad Alrshedy¹ Teflah Thayid Abdullah Alshammari² Shahah Aloush Sadyan Alshammry² Noot Murdhi Saleem Alshammri² Latifa Mousa Alrashidi³ Marzoogha Fawaz Mohammed Alshammri⁴ Maram Mohammed Shkar Alruwaili⁵ Manar Mohammed Shkar Alruwaili⁶

1 Social Worker, Hail General Hospital

2 Nursing Technician, Hail General Hospital

3 Nursing Technician, Irada Hospital for Mental Health

4 Nursing Specialist, Hail General Hospital

5 Nursing Technician, Al-Jawf Women, Maternity, and Children's Hospital

6 Nursing Specialist, Assistant Management of Commitment in Al-Jouf Health

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a global threat that is felt in the lives of millions. CKD management involves patient care that is physical, psychological, social, and emotional. Holistic care in improving the quality of life of patients for better health outcomes has a major role for social workers and nurses.

Aim of work: To explore and critically analyze the roles of social workers and nurses in providing holistic care for patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Methods: We conducted a comprehensive search in the MEDLINE database's electronic literature using the following search terms: Role, Social Workers, Nurses, Holistic Care, Patients, Chronic Kidney Disease. The search was restricted to publications from 2016 to 2024 in order to locate relevant content. We performed a search on Google Scholar to locate and examine academic papers that pertain to my subject matter. The selection of articles was impacted by certain criteria for inclusion.

Results: The publications analyzed in this study encompassed from 2016 to 2024. The study was structured into various sections with specific headings in the discussion section.

Conclusion: The social workers and nurses roles in caring for patients with chronic illnesses such as CKD include the following, but are not limited to: holistic approach to medical, emotional, and social issues; thereby providing comprehensive treatment for patients according to their area of need. It empowers the patients through education, emotional support, advocacy, and care coordination, to deal with the challenges of CKD while improving their quality of life. Interdisciplinary care between social work and nursing was very much concerned with and showed such a good example of teamwork in achieving good outcome. This sets them apart among the best in the industry. They will most likely face many challenges during their career but at the same time, they will do a great deal for CKD in terms of bringing hope and healing into the face of a chronic conditions which has often proven daunting and overwhelming. Care will not shrink in importance but will grow and develop further as the prevalence of CKD increases. It is quite certain and obvious that all social workers and nurses would still remain custodians of intimate and effective care.

Keywords: *Role, Social Workers, Nurses, Holistic Care, Patients, Chronic Kidney Disease*

INTRODUCTION

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is one such health issue that's worldwide, leaving millions grappling with their ways of survival (Kovesdy, 2022). In the progressive form, a loss of kidney function happens gradually over time, and the complications associated with it often include cardiovascular disease and electrolyte imbalance, and in severe cases, end-stage renal disease

(ESRD). Managing chronic kidney disease necessitates a holistic approach: patients not only care for their physical welfare but also their psychosocial and emotional well-being. In this sense, the intervention of social work and nursing is critical into which holistic care incorporates in the patient's quality of life and better health outcomes (Marin et al., 2023).

Holistic care for CKD patients is more than administering the drug for diseases; it includes knowing the variety of parameters that influence the lives of patients, as in their socio-economic status, mental well-being, family dynamics, and culture (Gautam & Kiran, 2024). Nurses and social workers are thus a crucial part of multidisciplinary care teams, bringing different perspectives and skills into the service of these determinants. Collective effort is vital in individualizing care plans that will help patients cope with their disease and retain their dignity and autonomy (Assiri et al., 2024).

Nurses usually act as the primary source of disease information to patients. They keep the patient and his family informed about how well the disease is progressing by maintaining communication between these individuals. Their roles will include making observations for alterations in the physical well-being of the patient by administering treatment and detailing the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through diet and medications. Their close and consistent interaction with patients allows them to identify emerging health issues early and intervene promptly. As such, nurses comfort patients during their illness journey, as they help in making patients apparently comfortable in dealing with the fate and future effects of their chronic illness (Alaklopi et al., 2024).

On the other hand, social workers help in psychosocial and environmental issues of CKD patients. Normally, these professionals are very familiar with the core workings of the healthcare system, and, thus, help patients link with needed services such as financial assistance programs, support groups, transport, and so on. They advocate for patients and ensure their voice is heard on things related to their care. Most importantly, social workers help bring their patients and families close to healthcare providers through effective communication (Abbas & Ali, 2023).

Caring for patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) is such that their nursing kind of cadre must be well partnered with social work because CKD requires care over time and brings about complications such as needing dialysis or kidney transplantation. It is this interdisciplinary partnership that would provide a comprehensive framework for health delivery--both medical and social determinants. Nurses address the technical aspects, like the machines and dialysis, while social workers help clients adjust to nonclinical conditions, such as maintaining a job or managing family responsibilities (Senteio & Callahan, 2020).

The combined effort of social workers and nurses strengthens the holistic care of patients with CKD. The merging of their competencies guarantees patient-centered, culturally sensitive care geared toward the varied needs of these individuals living with a chronic illness. By addressing the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of health, these professionals help CKD patients navigate their journeys with resilience and hope, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being and quality of life.

AIM OF WORK

The review attempts to discover and critique the roles of social workers and nurses in the holistic care of patients suffering from chronic kidney disease (CKD). It seeks to expound on the specific contributions of these two professionals to holistic care in the following areas: physical, emotional, social or psychological well-being. The exploration of the challenges, efforts and opportunities experienced by the two parties will prove useful in establishing the value of interdisciplinary approaches in improving patient outcomes and quality of life in general.

METHODS

A thorough search was carried out on well-known scientific platforms like Google Scholar and Pubmed, utilizing targeted keywords such as Role, Social Workers, Nurses, Holistic Care, Patients, and Chronic Kidney Disease. The goal was to collect all pertinent research papers. Articles were chosen according to certain criteria. Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of the abstracts and notable titles of each publication, we eliminated case reports, duplicate articles, and publications without full information. The reviews included in this research were published from 2016 to 2024.

RESULTS

The current investigation concentrated on the roles of social workers and nurses in providing holistic care for patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) between 2016 and 2024. As a result, the review was published under many headlines in the discussion area, including: Understanding Chronic Kidney Disease and Its Impacts, The Role of Social Workers in CKD Care, The Role of Nurses in CKD Care, Collaboration Between Social Workers and Nurses, Challenges and Opportunities in CKD Care

DISCUSSION

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) manifests as a serious public health challenge because of its gradual inability to function. Management of these conditions requires multidisciplinary approaches aimed at meeting the psychological, social, and emotional needs of patients. Within the health team, social workers and nurses are integral to the medical care of the patients as holistic caregivers who facilitate customized support to individuals based on their circumstances. Their work in education, emotional support, advocacy, and coordination of care makes them a backbone for improving treatment adherence and quality of life for patients (Yaqoob & Ayyub, 2023).

Understanding Chronic Kidney Disease and Its Impacts

Chronic kidney disease progresses and if not managed properly ends up with end-stage renal disease for the individual. It currently affects millions globally mainly having risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, and sometimes genetics. Other than the physical challenges, it places an emotional burden, and even a financial burden to the patients and their families. The patient diagnosis results in nothing but fright, anxiety, and helplessness as he has to deal with long-term life treatment, frequent hospital visits, and diet changes. Financial struggles also worsen the case by the price of medicine, dialysis, and a possible loss of income because of reduced productivity (Charles & Ferris, 2020).

Social workers and nurses fall perfectly into the definition of tackling these kinds of almost all problems since they lie within the boundary of healthcare and social support. That is when the wellness of patients will depend not only on medical intervention. Because of the holistic approach taken by those professionals, interconnected parts of health are taken care of, and patients are guaranteed that their resources on multiple channels- that is physical, emotional, and social aspects-will be addressed (Reis da Silva, 2024).

The Role of Social Workers in CKD Care

The social worker is experienced enough in talebearing through the social determinants of health, which are the major influences of outcomes concerning the CKD patients. Their task starts with the recognition of all the patients' situations, chiefly financial issues, family matters, housing, and even accessibility regarding healthcare services. This facilitates the formulation of individualized plans for care that take into account what hinders patients from progressing (Hansen et al., 2022).

The primary roles of social workers involve emotional support. Kidney disease has a knack for provoking serious psychological issues such as depression, anxiety attacks, and feelings of social isolation. The truth is that social workers offer counseling services, which would help patients in demolishing their emotional bottlenecks and coming up with healthy coping styles. They also hold support groups that provide safe spaces for patients to air their experiences and gather strength from others with similar experiences (Senteio & Callahan, 2020).

Another of the important roles of social workers is advocacy. They liaise between the patients and the different organizations that offer such services to be able to provide the patient with resources such as financial assistances, transportation, and housing. For example, they can assist patients in application for the disability benefit, enrollment to insurance programs, or even find charities that fund medical equipment, thus making it possible for patients to concentrate on their health and treatment instead of worrying about practical issues (Seekles & Ormandy, 2022).

Social workers also play important roles with patients-counseling patients. They make it a point that the patients understand their illness and treatment options and following the prescribed treatments. This education is made suitable for the health literacy level of patients so that they can be empowered to make educated choices relating to their care. Besides, social workers also address the family members on how to encourage their loved ones and help them through the emotional strain of caregiving (Hansen et al., 2022).

The Role of Nurses in CKD Care

Nurses provide direct patient care and act as important links into the wider health team but also into networks of care, which often embraces family. They encompass an extensive array of activities, ranging from monitoring patients' physical health to delivering treatments and educating patients on managing their chronic disease (Thema, 2024).

Patient education holds one of the topmost roles in nurses' contributions to CKD care. Nurses spend a lot of time with patients to explain this disease and its management. They provide detailed instructions on dietary restrictions, strict medication adherence, and necessary fluid management, all aimed at slowing the progression of this disease. Thus, they empower patients through continuous education to take an active role in their health, reducing them to feeling more in control of their health (Assiri et al., 2024).

Nurses also have an essential function in the early identification and prevention of complications among patients because they are the ones who constantly monitor the vital signs, the laboratory results, and the symptoms of the patients. They are the ones who identify possible problems before they develop into major issues. Such action is necessary as regards CKD because it is always timely that an intervention results in better outcomes. For instance, it might be fluid overload or

electrolytes disturbance, and the nurse will then collaborate with the physician to modify the treatment plan (Debone et al., 2017).

Among the things nurses can do is provide emotional support. Most patients with CKD go through a roller coaster of emotions, including feeling frustrated and angry, sad, and fearful. The patients can explain themselves while finding comfort and realizing that they are in a listening ear. This is achieved because of the nurses' empathetic nature that induces trust, which inspires the patients to come forth and disclose things related to their treatment (silva et al., 2016). They do provide direct patient care and act as important links into the wider health team but also into networks of care, which often embraces family. They encompass an extensive array of activities, ranging from monitoring patients' physical health to delivering treatments and educating patients on managing their chronic disease (Thema, 2024).

Furthermore, nurses are involved in the management of care. Chronic kidney disease usually needs input from different types of specialists-nephrologists, dietitians, and psychologists. Nurses help facilitate the easy coordination between these professionals and ensure that it is a team approach to care. Besides this, they will also keep track of follow-up appointments and keep monitoring of patients' progress as they modify care plans whenever required to make sure patients are being monitored evenly and comprehensively (Assiri et al., 2024).

Collaboration Between Social Workers and Nurses

The roles between social workers and nurses are critical in offering holistic care for CKD patients. Although the roles are different, they complement one another. While addressing the patient's needs, the interdisciplinary approach would make this patient-centered and include medical, psychological, and social support (Cahill, 2024).

Effective communication is the key to collaborating with each other. Social workers and nurses regularly exchange information concerning patients' progress, limitations, and needs to better attune their interventions to patients' needs. In some cases, when an intervention is applicable, the nurse will inform the social worker of a patient's inability to adhere to dietary restrictions. The social worker will then evaluate certain areas, such as insufficient income or access restrictions, for feeding issues. In a similar scenario, the social worker may report an emotional issue to the nurse, who in turn may place the patient under additional observation during a medical appointment for support purposes (Pierce, 2020).

Hospital-to-home care is also specifically assisted through discharge planning initiated by social workers and nurses involving CKD patients. They set up necessary resources, follow-on appointments, and social systems, making it easier to handle the condition. The collaboration reduces the chances of readmissions, making patients stay under care. (Seekles & Ormandy, 2022).

Challenges and Opportunities in CKD Care

Despite vital contributions to patients with CKD care, there are challenges encountered by social workers and nurses involved with CKD care. These include a high number of patients managed by a few staff which primarily do not have adequate resources, and the patient doesn't have simple needs, so this becomes a challenging scenario. Stigma also surrounds CKD and dialysis, thus

rendering patients unable to seek help, hence making it difficult for healthcare professionals to reach out to those in need (Senteio & Callahan, 2020).

Nonetheless, these challenges also provide windows of opportunities for changes and innovations. Development in the field of technology like telehealth and electronic health records would potentially allow social workers as well as nurses to reach more and have better care coordination. Interdisciplinary collaboration and cultural competency describing the training programs empower these professionals, so they would be able to meet the more complex diverse patient needs among the CKD patients more effectively (Tuot & Boulware, 2017).

Moreover, expanding the social work practice into policy advocacy is needed to address systemic barriers in care. Social workers and nurses work together to push for policy changes that will increase funding for CKD programs, improve access to more affordable medications, and support research into innovative treatments. Amplification of their voices could make a significant difference for patients and healthcare systems as a whole (Schubert et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a complex condition that requires a thorough treatment approach in all aspects, from the psychosomatic to the emotional needs of the patient, as well as social and psychological needs. Social workers and nurses play important roles in delivering holistic care, each having their own contributions to improved patient outcomes from diverse backgrounds. They come to address the social determinants of health with empirical emotional support and advocacy as well as other critical alternative resources. They offer assistance to those affected through learning during community connections such that the financial woes created by CKD as well as the emotional burden are surmounted.

Whereas in nursing, direct patient care is provided, health indicators are observed, patient education on disease management is done, emotional soothing of patients is provided through kind acts, and all other activities are performed. Their invaluable role in early detection and prevention of complications is crucial in slowing down the disease process, which almost always led to better treatment plans. In this way, these professionals ensure the patients have the right medical care as well as the support required to deal with those larger social impacts of living with CKD.

Collaboration between social worker and nurse is a model for the strength of interdisciplinary care. Effective communications and teamwork produce specific and appropriate patient-centered interventions. Despite various challenges which include resource and caseload constraints, collaboration improves the quality of life for patients suffering from CKD. Current strides in technology and advocacy for more favorable policies present avenues for further tackling the barriers associated with innovation and equity in CKD care.

In summary, the very important contributions made by social workers and nurses are significant in serving multifaceted needs of patients suffering from CKD. Their holistic approach is meant to ensure that these patients are assisted in contexts beyond the health center or hospital and better equipped with knowledge and skills to navigate the minefield of chronic illness. Even as the population of people with CKD continues to swell, these roles will always be key in providing compassionate, effective, and fully-fledged care.

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