

SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION IN FEMALE DIALYSIS PATIENTS

Srikanth Seethala, Mark L. Unruh, Rachel Hess, Steven D. Weisbord

There has been considerable research on erectile dysfunction in patients on dialysis, however considerably less is known about sexual dysfunction in women receiving maintenance dialysis. We sought to assess sexual dysfunction in female patients receiving chronic peritoneal dialysis (PD) or hemodialysis (HD).

We approached all female patients at 6 HD and 1 PD units in western Pennsylvania and asked them to complete the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI), a 19-item index that assesses 6 domains of sexual function (desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, pain and satisfaction). Total FSFI scores < 26.5 are consistent with the presence of sexual dysfunction. We also asked patients whether they had discussed their sexual dysfunction with a gynecologist, renal provider or PCP and whether they had received any treatment.

Of 122 patients approached, 66 were eligible and enrolled. 22 (33%) reported not being sexually active and were not included in our analysis of sexual dysfunction. Of the remaining 44 patients, the mean age was 59, 50% were diabetic and 52% were residing with a significant other. Overall, 33 patients (75%) had FSFI scores < 26.5, while 70% of patients residing with a significant other had FSFI scores < 26.5. Mean scores for each of the 6 individual domains were consistent with significant impairment (Table). Only 21% of patients with sexual dysfunction discussed this issue with a gynecologist and none had spoken with a renal provider or PCP. None of the patients reported receiving any treatment for sexual dysfunction.

Sexual dysfunction is highly prevalent in women on dialysis. Multiple domains of sexual function are impaired in this patient population. Very few patients appear to discuss this problem with healthcare

providers or receive treatment. Future efforts should focus on improving the assessment of and implementation of therapy for sexual dysfunction in women on dialysis.

Domain (N)	Mean scores	Range
Desire (44)	2.45	1.2-6
Arousal (42)	2.28	0-6
Orgasm (39)	2.13	0-6
Lubrication (40)	2.22	0-6
Satisfaction(36)	3.03	0.8-6
Pain(34)	3.23	0-6