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Socioeconomic Impact of Chronic Kidney Disease in Malaysia: Work Productivity among Advanced Non-Dialysis Patients

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Objectives : Chronic kidney disease (CKD) exacts a notable socioeconomic toll. In Malaysia, the prevalence of CKD stood at 15% in 2018. Complications from CKD lead to frequent hospitalisations, resulting in work disability and unemployment. This study focuses on the employment rate and evaluation of work productivity among advanced non-dialysis CKD patients in Malaysia.

Methods : Conducted at a single centre, this cross-sectional study encompassed patients aged 18 to 60 years with advanced CKD (stage 4 and 5 non-dialysis). Face-to-face interviews gauged subjects' employment status. Employed individuals underwent further assessment using the Work Productivity and Activity Impairment-General Health (WPAI-GH) questionnaire. This tool evaluated four key scores: absenteeism (missed work time), presenteeism (reduced on-the-job effectiveness), work productivity loss (overall work impairment), and activity impairment. Scores, expressed as percentages, denoted higher numbers correlating with increased impairment and diminished productivity.

Results : Our study recruited a total of 318 advanced CKD patients, comprising 44.7% in CKD stage 4 and 55.3% in CKD stage 5. The mean age of participants was 49.0 ± 9.0 years, with 53.5% being males. Diabetes was identified as the predominant cause of CKD (67.0%), followed by hypertension (11.3%). Notably, only 50% of the participants were employed ($n=159$), with 47.8% in CKD stage 4 and 52.2% in CKD stage 5. Young age ($p<0.001$), male gender ($p=0.004$) and higher education ($p=0.032$) were associated with employment. Employed individuals exhibited a mean percentage of 51.32 ± 15.23 impairment due to health (presenteeism), 24.35 ± 15.23 overall work impairment, and 13.36 ± 32.34 mean percentages of absenteeism due to the disease burden.

Conclusions : The employment rate among advanced CKD patients in Malaysia stands at a concerning 50%, with over half of the participants reporting work impairment due to health issues. This underscores the urgency for targeted measures to address this issue to support patients in sustaining employment with optimal work productivity.