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Posttraumatic stress symptoms in hemodialysis patients with MERS-CoV exposure

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Objectives:

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur in patients with medical illness. During the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak in South Korea in 2015, some dialysis patients in three centers who were incidentally exposed to patients or medical staff with confirmed MERS-CoV infection were isolated to interrupt the spread of the infection. We aimed to investigate the prevalence rate of PTSD and risk factors among these patients.

Methods:

In total, 116 hemodialysis (HD) patients in close contact with MERS-CoV-confirmed subjects were isolated using three strategies, namely, single room isolation, cohort isolation, and self-quarantine. We used the Impact of Event Scale-Revised-Korean (IES-R-K) to examine features of PTSD at 12 months after the isolation period.

Results: Of the 116 HD patients, 27 were lost to follow-up. Of the 89 patients, 67 (75.3%) completed the questionnaires. Single room isolation was used on 40 (58.8%) of the patients, cohort isolation on 20 (29.4%), and self-imposed quarantine on 8 (11.8%)[A1]. In total, 17.9% of participants (n = 12) reported PTSD symptoms exceeding the IES-R-K's cutoff point. Prevalence rates of PTSD symptoms did not differ significantly according to isolation method. In multivariate analyses, being female (odds ratio (OR) = 5.67, 95% confidential interval (CI) = 1.23–24.26; P = 0.02) and low isolation duration (OR = 0.76, 95% CI = 0.60-0.95; P = 0.02) were independently associated with PTSD symptoms.

Conclusions:

MERS was a traumatic experience for quarantined HD patients. The prevalence rate of PTSD was considerable and being female and short isolation were associated with PTSD symptoms.