



Shaping Tomorrow's Nephrology: Insight-Driven Kidney Care

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Survival with a Digital Safety Net: Impact of a Major Physician Walkout and AKI Alert System Suspension on Patient Outcomes

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Objectives : On February 20, 2024, a major physician walkout led to a critical shortage of junior doctors at our tertiary center. Due to the extreme clinical overload, the real-time Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) Alert System was temporarily suspended (blocked) in March 2024. This study evaluates how the simultaneous loss of human expertise and automated surveillance affected AKI incidence and clinical outcomes.

Methods : AKI indicators were analyzed across four phases based on workforce and system status: Phase 1 (Feb 20 – Apr 2024): Acute workforce depletion and AKI Alert System suspension. Phase 2 (May 2024): Reinforcement of clinical fellows; Alert System remained blocked. Phase 3 (Jun 2024 – Aug 2025): Resumption of the AKI Alert System, supported by dedicated nephrology nurses and downsized bed capacity. Phase 4 (Sep 2025 – Present): Normalization after the return of junior doctors.

Results : In Phase 1, the absence of both specialists and the Alert System led to a sharp increase in AKI incidence, peaking at 13.6% (vs. 9.5% at baseline), with Stage 2-3 AKI rising to 32.9%. Following the reinforcement of fellows (May) and the resumption of the Alert System (June), the 48-hour consultation rate stabilized. Notably, during Phase 3, although dedicated nurses did not directly manage the AKI system, their administrative support reduced the burden on staff nephrologists, allowing for concentrated specialist care. This synergy maintained a renal recovery rate above 60% despite reduced hospital capacity. All indicators returned to baseline in Phase 4.

Conclusions : The suspension of an automated Alert System during a junior doctors' strike immediately compromised AKI outcomes, proving its role as a vital safety net. The subsequent recovery through fellow reinforcement and system resumption demonstrates that human expertise and automated alerts are synergetic and essential for ensuring patient safety during large-scale healthcare disruptions.

AKI_trend_MA3_phase_shaded.png



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