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A Planning of Evacuation System With Local Administration for Chronic Dialysis Patients in Preparation for the Onset of Nankai Trough Megathrust Earthquake in Japan

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Over the past 30 years, Japan had experienced several big earthquakes, including the 1995 Hanshin-Awaji, 2011 Great East Japan, 2016 Kumamoto, and 2024 Noto Peninsula earthquakes. And now, both Tokyo Metropolitan earthquake and Nankai Trough megathrust earthquake are estimated to occur within the next 30 years with a 70–80% probability, leading them to severe shaking, infrastructure damage, and large tsunami in the wide epicenter area. So, to prepare these terrible disasters, it is essential urgently to build up a reliable medical support system for dialysis patients. In Shizuoka Prefecture where approximately 11,000 patients have been undergoing regular hemodialysis in more than 130 dialysis facilities, Nankai Trough earthquake is predicted in causing seismic intensities of 6 to 7 in this area, and subsequently disrupting supply systems of city water, electricity and gas in long-term. So, it is likely therefore that thousands of patients, especially who are elderly and frail, may not be able to access to their dialysis centers, making evacuation highly difficult and complex. Effective disaster team requires collaboration not only among medical staffs, but also with local administration and the Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT). In Japan, liaison teams are already established in the field such as psychiatry and pediatric/perinatal care, which act as a bridge between medical teams and external support organizations. However, such liaison team has not been established yet in the field of dialysis. Since 2023, Shizuoka Prefecture administration has initially included dialysis professionals as “Disaster-Time Dialysis Liaisons” into the annual disaster response training, collaborating with DMAT and local authorities to evaluate disaster damages in the dialysis center, and then to coordinate evacuative transport of dialysis patients out of the disaster area. In this presentation, we first review the process of dialysis preparedness at the onset of big earthquake in Japan. We also show our ongoing initiatives for dialysis-related liaison team until now.

Keywords: Disaster preparedness, Dialysis, Disaster drill, Nankai Trough Megaquake, Liaison