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Barriers to the successful practice of chronic kidney diseases at the primary health care level: A systematic review

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Background: Chronic kidney disease (CKD), a major global public health problem, has been recognized as one of the eleven important causes of death. This review explores a wide range of barriers related to patients and health systems involved in controlling the prevalence of CKD at the primary health care level.

Patients & Method: Electronic databases including PubMed/Medline, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL), Entrez, British Medical Journal (BMJ), EBSCO host, Cochrane and Google scholar were searched for the data published from 2000 to 2010 using MeSH terms such as 'chronic kidney diseases', 'renal transplantation', 'complications', 'health care services', 'acute renal failure'. After screening 587 abstracts, a total of 10 studies were selected for systematic review. Developed countries such as the United Kingdom, USA and other European countries were reviewed in order to identify the barriers associated with CKD practice at the primary health care level. The reasons for the failure of services at the primary health care level were categorized. A pre-defined protocol was used for data extraction and content appraisal.

Results: At the primary health care level, the major barriers associated with CKD include the late referral of patients to nephrologists, old age, presence of several co-morbidities, lack of education and awareness among ethnic minorities, difficulty in communication between primary health care professionals and the shortage of multi-disciplinary care team at dialysis centers. Additionally, factors such as drug-drug interaction during treatment, lack of anemia management during dialysis, hypertension and depression in CKD patients also act as important barriers in CKD care at the primary health care level.

Conclusion: The knowledge and awareness about CKD management is lacking. Therefore, educational intervention is essential for patients' as well medical personnel. Also, a multidisciplinary care team is essential for the complex management of CKD due to associated co-morbidities.

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