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ASN KIDNEY WEEK 2015 • NOVEMBER 3–8 • SAN DIEGO, CA

TELEMEDICINE FOR KIDNEY DISEASE APPEARS TO BE ON PAR WITH CONVENTIONAL CARE

Remote care technologies proven valuable in providing high-quality, patient-centered kidney care

Highlights

- Among patients with chronic kidney disease enrolled in either a telenephrology clinic or a conventional nephrology clinic, compliance with telenephrology visits was shown to be equal to or better than conventional care.
- The study showed composite clinical outcomes (end stage renal disease, doubling of serum creatinine, and death) did not differ between the groups. This data will be presented at ASN Kidney Week 2015 November 3–8 at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, CA.

San Diego, CA (November 7, 2015) — Using telemedicine to deliver care remotely to patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) via videoconferencing (also known as telenephrology) is essentially equal to conventional in-person care for managing the disease, and may even be superior for visit compliance, according to a study that will be presented at ASN Kidney Week 2015 November 3–8 at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, CA.

The study's main author, Rajeev Rohatgi, MD, FASN, explained that evidence points to the fact that CKD patients who live far from a nephrology practice are hospitalized more frequently and have a higher mortality rate than patients who live near one. Thus, for this retrospective observational study, Rohatgi and his team analyzed clinical outcomes of 121 CKD patients who lived near and enrolled at the Bronx Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) clinic and compared them to 117 CKD patients who lived far from a VA nephrologist and enrolled in telenephrology sessions. These patients were evaluated remotely by a nephrologist located at the Bronx VAMC from 2008 to 2014.

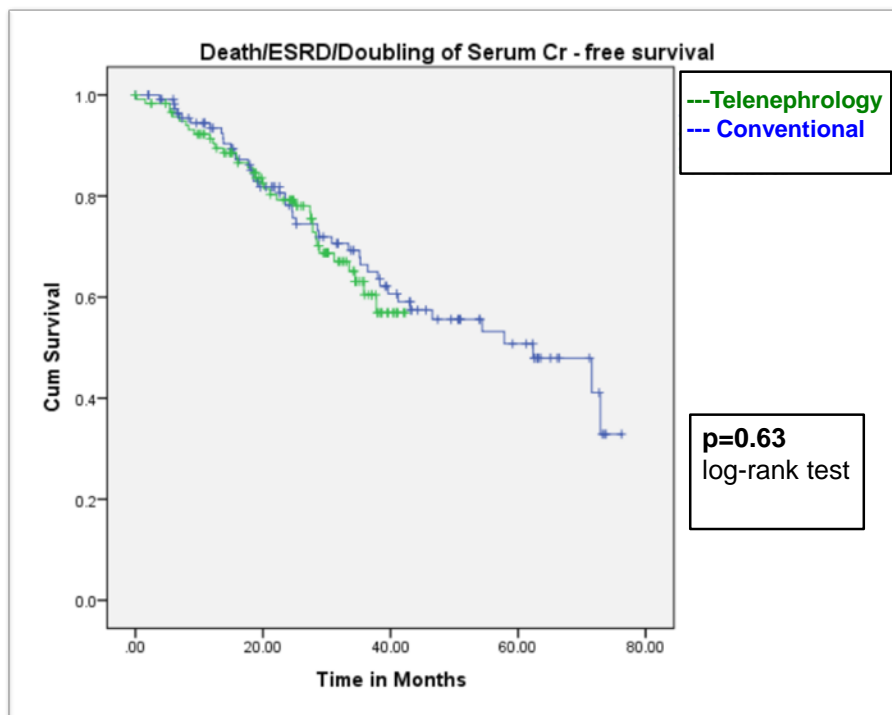
The kidney disease characteristics—initial creatinine, eGFR, distribution of CKD stage, and urine protein—of the two groups were similar. However, the frequency of attending appointments was greater in the telenephrology group (70.8%) versus the conventional

care group (61.8%), which was driven by a greater frequency of cancelled visits in the conventional care (27.9%) versus the telenephrology group (15.8%).

Moreover, prior to the establishment of a telenephrology service, more than 50% of patients who lived far from a VA nephrologist either cancelled or missed their scheduled appointments at the Bronx VAMC. However, after instituting telenephrology, this was reduced by nearly half. The researchers speculate that delivering care to CKD patients locally improves the likelihood that they will attend their scheduled visits and this, in turn, leads to clinical outcomes that are equal to conventional care.

“These data imply that remote delivery of care via telenephrology has the potential to deliver equitable, patient-centered care to a geographically diverse patient population,” Rohatgi said, “while alleviating disparity in care.”

Figure 1: Graph showing comparable composite outcomes in telenephrology and conventional care cohorts



Study: “Telenephrology for the Remote Management of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD): A Retrospective Cohort Study” (Abstract SA-PO714)

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ASN Kidney Week 2015, the largest nephrology meeting of its kind, will provide a forum for more than 13,000 professionals to discuss the latest findings in kidney health research and engage in educational sessions related to advances in the care of patients with kidney and related disorders. Kidney Week 2015 will take place November 3–8, 2015, in San Diego, CA.

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