

World Kidney Day 2021: Community Awareness

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Introduction

On 11th March 2021, the celebrations of World Kidney Day took place. This global campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of our kidneys among the citizens of the world. These paired organs silently work non-stop to remove the toxins from the body, maintain fluid and electrolyte balance. Other important functions include blood pressure maintenance, erythropoietin for red blood cells and vitamin D for optimal bone health. There are multiple diseases that affect the kidney with varying degrees of severity. Unless recognized and investigated, the disease will progress to a point of no return. The theme for this year is “Living Well with Kidney Disease” which is a spotlight on multiple ways how a normal life can be led in people with kidney disease.

History of World Kidney Day ^[1]

World Kidney Day is a joint initiative of the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF). World Kidney Day started in 2006 and has not stopped growing ever since. Every year, the campaign highlights a particular theme.

- 2021 Living Well with Kidney Disease
- 2020 Kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere – from Prevention to Detection and Equitable Access to Care
- 2019 Kidney Health for Everyone, Everywhere

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- 2018 Kidneys & Women’s Health. Include, Value, Empower
- 2017 Kidney Disease & Obesity – Healthy Lifestyle for Healthy Kidneys
- 2016 Kidney Disease & Children – Act Early to Prevent It!
- 2015 Kidney Health for All
- 2014 Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and aging
- 2013 Kidneys for Life – Stop Kidney Attack!
- 2012 Donate – Kidneys for Life – Receive
- 2011 Protect your kidneys: Save your heart
- 2010 Protect your kidneys: Control diabetes
- 2009 Protect your kidneys: Keep your pressure down
- 2008 Your amazing kidneys!
- 2007 CKD: Common, harmful and treatable
- 2006 Are your kidneys OK?

Disease burden in India

The burden of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in India cannot be assessed accurately. The approximate prevalence of CKD is 800 per million population (pmp), and the incidence of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) is 150–200 pmp. The most common cause of CKD in population-based studies is diabetic nephropathy.^[2] There is no nationwide acute kidney injury (AKI) registry, significant lacunae exist in the knowledge of AKI in Indian ICU. The existing Indian data on AKI in critically ill patients are derived from multiple single-centre studies.^[3,4,5,6,7,8,9] Majority of the data available is from patients who have presented to the hospital, usually in a severe condition.

Unlike the more famous heart and recently lungs, the initial symptoms of kidney disease are subtle:

- Altered sleep patterns
- Nausea
- Metallic taste in the mouth
- Swelling over the ankles and around eyes
- High blood pressure

These symptoms occur in many diseases, hence timely investigations are needed to pick up the dysfunction of kidneys in the early stage. By the time massive swelling over the body, shortness of breath or altered sensorium occurs, the severe form of the disease already begins. ICU stay is often warranted with precise balancing of fluids and electrolytes to prevent shock. In chronic kidney disease (CKD), dialysis is required; the repeated procedure done from the blood vessels or the peritoneum. The last resort is kidney transplant, where a donor kidney from a healthy person or a cadaver is inserted by operation into the patient in an attempt to save his life.

High risk groups of people who may have kidney disease are the following:

- Diabetes (Most common CKD co-morbidity in India)^[2]
- Hypertension
- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Pain medication (e.g. NSAID) abuse

This knowledge is readily available in books and on the internet, but is that really good enough? George Bernard Shaw said, "the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place". In the slum areas of Mumbai, a significant proportion of adults are uneducated. Literate people too are not aware about kidney diseases nor the steps required to prevent and cure the same. Taking the opportunity of this campaign, our team from Nair Hospital went to the slums of Mankhurd for an interactive session with the residents of the area.

Speaking in simple Hindi, we first quizzed the participants on their knowledge about kidneys and the diseases affecting it. A handful knew that diabetics are at higher risk, and an old lady sheepishly admitted that consuming pain medication daily had got her admitted for kidney disease once. We then discussed the symptoms and risk factors. For prevention and living with kidney disease, we elaborated on the following:

- Importance of salt restriction, low fat and less sug-

ars in the diet

- Consuming fresh foods instead of packaged.
- Less than 2300mg (half teaspoon) of sodium per person^[10]
- At least 30 minutes of exercise daily
- Quitting addictions

We explained the importance of regular check-ups. Yearly check of creatinine and blood urea nitrogen along with blood sugar levels, cholesterol and lipid profile for adults above 40 years, while 6 monthly follow up for diabetic and hypertensive patients was suggested. Waiting for symptoms is not the ideal method, better to come for follow up regularly.

Simple slogans were quoted and repeated by the Nursing students and the audience for emphasis. Short at catchy, we hope that these two liners let the message be spread to their home, friends and relatives.

कल तक मत करो, इसे करें आज

बी. पी. और गुर्दे का करें इलाज।

जरूरत से ज्यादा दर्द की दवा न खाएं

अपने दो प्यारे गुर्दे को बचाएं।

पैकेट की चीजों से अपना पेट न भरना

ताज़ा खाना का भोजन करना।

थोड़ा व्यायाम और थोड़ा परेज

दिल और गुर्दे रहेंगे तेज।

चीनी कम और नमक को आधा

गुर्दे स्वस्थ होंगे, यह है मेरा वादा

Key Points

This World Kidney Day, the message of healthy living with kidney disease needs to percolate to the population. Only through awareness can people identify the symptoms early. Common signs of kidney diseases overlap with other illnesses so a screening blood test at

regular intervals is a good way to pick up the disease early. Diabetes is the most common co-morbidity associated with kidney disease. Pain medication, hypertension, smoking are also high risk factors. Diet regulation in terms of low sodium and less sugar is important. Prefer natural complex carbohydrates and fresh food over packaged items. Regular exercise is important. If having chronic kidney disease, ensure strict adherence to the above along with timely follow up for dialysis. Kidney transplant is the end stage option.

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