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P299 -The role of a young adult transition nurse in a renal service

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INTRODUCTION

The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine states that 'young adulthood is a unique and critical time of development where unmet health needs and health disparities can be high.'¹ The SPEAK (Surveying Patients Experiencing young Adult Failure) study found young adults on renal replacement therapy (RRT) had poorer quality of life, inferior mental well-being and were twice as likely to have psychological problems compared to age-matched peers². If these patients were on dialysis these problems were even greater². Factors which were associated with better well-being included openness, greater independence and increased social support¹.

Young adults with end stage renal disease were twice as likely to be unemployed, less likely to be in a relationship and more likely to live at home compared to their counterparts in the general population². As well as the psychological and social implications renal disease can have on young adults data also suggests their mortality is high with 1 in 10 young adults starting renal replacement therapy dying within 5 years². We aimed to review the young adult population in our unit, their views and experiences of our service, particularly of our young adult transition nurse, who was appointed with the support of our local kidney charity.

METHODS

We collected electronic data on all our young adults between 17 and 30 years with renal disease. We sent our young adult patients on RRT an online questionnaire to gain insight into their views on our service and our young adult transition nurse particularly in relation to the challenges highlighted in SPEAK.

RESULTS

In 2018 we had 243 young adult patients (aged 17-30 years) under the care of the renal unit. Of these 37 have a renal transplant, 3 are on peritoneal dialysis and 11 on haemodialysis. Their renal diagnoses are IgA nephropathy 21, renal dysplasia 13, reflux nephropathy 11, interstitial nephritis 4, nail patella syndrome 1, focal segmental glomerulosclerosis 1.

Of the young adults on RRT 17/51 (33%) responded to our survey. 100% felt having a young adult transition nurse was beneficial.

92% of the young adults who had transitioned from paediatric care felt it useful to meet the consultant and link nurse in the paediatric setting prior to transitioning. 92% found the Facebook page run by the transition nurse helpful. Their reasons for highlighting the benefits of using the social media page was to meet and talk with other young adults with the same health conditions, for increased support and to engage with arranged social activities.

The survey also showed the young adults gained significant benefit from the annual weekend away.

DISCUSSION

Young adults make up a significant proportion of the adult renal population, but they have additional needs, both psychologically and socially, which are not always addressed in adult renal medicine services.

A young adult transition nurse who attends both the paediatric and young adult transition clinics and is a contact point for young adults within the unit, facilitates a Facebook page and arranges social events can provide vital support to this age group.