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Best Health Care Medical Group, Inc.
Professor Mike Mirahmadi, M.D.
Diplomate, American Board of Internal Medicine & Nephrology
Clinical Professor of Medicine at UCLA

Long-Term Outcomes of Patients Who Receive Short-Term Dialysis

Acute kidney injury is associated with risk for chronic dialysis but not for death.

Patients with severe acute kidney injury who require dialysis have high mortality, and as many as 15% of survivors require chronic dialysis. However, outcomes for patients who suffer acute kidney injury but recover enough function to be discharged without continued dialysis are unknown.

Canadian researchers conducted a study of 3769 patients with acute kidney injury who required hospital dialysis and survived dialysis free for at least 30 days after discharge between 1996 and 2006. Dialysis patients (cases) were matched by age, sex, kidney disease history, and other variables with 13,598 hospitalized controls without acute kidney injury or dialysis. After a median follow-up of 3 years, incidence of chronic dialysis was significantly higher among cases than among controls (2.63 vs. 0.91 per 100 person-years). All-cause mortality was similar in the two groups.

Comment: This report provides more evidence that acute kidney injury is associated with risk for progressive chronic kidney disease. An editorialist notes that 1 of every 12 survivors with acute kidney injury who require temporary dialysis subsequently require chronic dialysis; therefore, postdischarge care of such patients should include close follow-up of renal function. In contrast to earlier reports, this study showed that patients with acute kidney injury did not have higher 3-year mortality than other hospitalized patients. This finding might be explained by differing patient populations across studies.

— [Neil H. Winawer, MD, FHM](#)

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Wald R et al. Chronic dialysis and death among survivors of acute kidney injury requiring dialysis. *JAMA* 2009 Sep 16; 302:1179.

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