

## Assessment and management of pain in hemodialysis patients: A pilot study

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### ABSTRACT

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**Purpose:** To assess pain levels of hemodialysis (HD) patients and to report pain management techniques.

**Materials and methods:** A quantitative descriptive study design with a summative approach to qualitative analysis was held, with a personal interview of the HD patients in a Southern European city hospital (n=70), using the Visual Analog Scales (VAS), the Wong-Baker Pain Scales (WBPS) and McGill Pain Questionnaire. People confused or in a coma, with hearing or reading problems and inability to communicate in the spoken language were excluded.

**Results:** Renal patients under investigation were 69.72 ±12.45 years old, male (58.5%) and on HD for 35.5 ± 27.4 months. In the Wong Baker Scale, pain was rated as “hurts little more” 30.8%, (n=20) and in the VAS 30.8% (n=20) reported 6/10 the amount of pain experienced. Forty-six percent pinpointed

internal pain in the legs. Pain experienced was characterized as sickening (70.8%), tiring (67.7%), burning (66.2%), rhythmic (86.2%), periodic (66.2%) and continuous (61.5%). The patients studied mainly manage pain either with warm towel/cloth (85.2% females and all male patients), with massage (84.2% and 88.9%, respectively) or painkillers (47.4% and 52.6%, respectively). In a correlation of gender and pain management techniques, statistical significance was found only with warm towel (p=0.038).

**Conclusions:** As renal patients are an increasing group of healthcare service users, and pain is affecting their everyday life, it is essential to individualize pain evaluation and to provide further education to clinical nurses so that they can effectively manage pain.

**Key words:** Renal replacement therapy, pain, hemodialysis

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