

Depression and Social Dysfunction among Chronic Renal Failure Patients

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: This descriptive cross-sectional study explores the demographic characteristics, social dysfunction, and depression levels.

Methods: To achieve the stated goals, 39 chronic renal failure patients chosen in accidental sampling method in Al Nasiriya city, Imam Hussain Teaching Hospital during the period from April 1, 2023, to September 1, 2023. Utilizing two domains of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) which they are depression and social dysfunction.

Results: The study reveals a diverse demographic profile, with a slight majority of females and a varied age distribution. The assessment of mental health highlights concerning levels of symptomatic experiences related to social failure and depression. In the social dysfunction, participants express moderate levels of thoughts such as worthlessness, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation. The analysis of daily functioning and satisfaction indicates both symptomatic and asymptomatic experiences, emphasizing the complexity of managing daily tasks. The assessment of depression reveals a substantial portion of participants experiencing symptomatic manifestations, suggesting a noteworthy presence of depressive symptoms within the studied population. The correlation analysis between social dysfunction and depression indicates a minimal and statistically nonsignificant relationship. This suggests that social dysfunction may not be a strong predictor of depressive symptoms within this study, emphasizing the need for a more comprehensive investigation into the intricate interplay between social aspects and depression. Factors such as individual resilience, coping mechanisms, social support, and cultural influences may contribute to the observed variability in responses.

Discussion: findings of the study highlight the importance of focusing on demographic factors in understanding mental health outcomes. There is an urgent need for intervention targeting chronic renal failure patients in social functioning domain as the prevalence of symptomatic experiences were high related to social failure and depression. Such conclusions stress the complexity of individuals' subjective experiences and emphasize the importance of comprehensive mental health support tailored to the specific challenges identified in the study.

Key words: Depression, social dysfunction, chronic renal failure.

Highlights

- **Diverse Demographics Influence Mental Health:**
 - Varied profile shapes mental well-being.
- **Nuanced Mental Health Experiences Revealed:**
 - Varying symptomatic thoughts highlight complexity.
- **Limited Correlation Between Social Dysfunction and Depression:**
 - Minimal, nonsignificant relationship prompts further exploration.

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INTRODUCTION

Chronic Renal Failure (CRF), a progressive and irreversible deterioration of kidney function, constitutes a substantial public health concern with far-reaching implications for affected individuals and healthcare systems globally¹

Chronic renal failure, a debilitating condition characterized by the gradual loss of kidney function, poses not only physiological challenges but also profound psychological implications for affected individuals. Among the myriad psychological aspects, depression and social dysfunction emerge as critical dimensions deserving focused exploration within this patient population²

The prevalence of CRF has witnessed a concerning rise in recent years, reflecting an escalating global burden of chronic diseases. A myriad of factors, including the aging population, lifestyle changes, and the increasing incidence of conditions like diabetes and hypertension, contributes to the growing prevalence of CRF. This prevalence is further exacerbated by health disparities, limited access to healthcare in certain regions, and challenges in early detection³

As a silent and insidious condition, CRF often manifests with subtle symptoms in its early stages, making it challenging to diagnose until it reaches more advanced phases. Consequently, a substantial number of individuals may unknowingly live with CRF, emphasizing the critical importance of proactive screening and awareness campaigns to facilitate early detection and intervention⁴

The prevalence of depression among CRF patients is a salient concern, often exacerbated by the relentless nature of the condition, the exigencies of treatments such as dialysis, and the uncertainty that accompanies the progression of the disease. Depression, when coupled with CRF, can significantly compromise the individual's quality of life, adherence to medical regimens, and overall health outcomes⁵.

Simultaneously, social dysfunction within the context of CRF reflects disruptions in the individual's ability to engage meaningfully with their social environment. The stigma associated with chronic illness, alterations in physical appearance due to treatments, and the pervasive impact of the disease on daily life contribute to a sense of social isolation. Understanding and addressing social dysfunction is integral to comprehending the holistic impact of CRF on an individual's life⁶.

Depression, a prevalent and often underdiagnosed mental health condition, has been recognized as a significant concern among individuals grappling with chronic renal failure. The intricate relationship between the physiological burden of the disease, the demanding nature of treatments such as dialysis, and the relentless progression of the condition contributes to the heightened vulnerability of these patients to depressive symptoms. Studies have consistently reported elevated rates of depression among chronic renal failure patients, impacting their overall quality of life, treatment adherence, and even clinical outcomes⁷.

Despite its prevalence and undeniable impact, depression among CRF patients often goes underdiagnosed and undertreated. The subtle nature of depressive symptoms, overlapping with the physical manifestations of CRF, underscores the need for a nuanced understanding and targeted interventions to address this mental health aspect effectively⁸

Simultaneously, social dysfunction, encompassing disruptions in interpersonal relationships, societal integration, and daily functioning, adds another layer of complexity to the mental health challenges

faced by this patient cohort⁹. The stigmatization associated with chronic diseases, the physical and psychosocial consequences of the illness, and the demanding treatment regimens can contribute to a sense of isolation and impaired social functioning. Understanding the nuances of social dysfunction is crucial in comprehending the holistic impact of chronic renal failure on the lives of individuals beyond the physiological realm¹⁰

METHODS

Descriptive cross sectional study design has been chosen to find out the demographic characteristics, depression level and social dysfunction among chronic renal failure patients. during the period from April 1, 2023, to September 1, 2023.

Study sample:

Study was conducted in al Nasiriya city, Imam Hussain teaching hospital.

Study setting:

Accidental sampling method where selected to choose 39 chronic renal disease patients in Imam Hussein Teaching Hospital. To determine exact Sample size by a specific equation for this type of study was used $\frac{z \times p q}{d}$.

Study Measurements:

By using General health questionnaire, (GHQ-28) is one of the highly used instruments to assess the psychosocial distress among patients with chronic diseases and non-psychiatric clinical, it is a 28-questions to measure depression level. In addition, part for demographic characteristics of the participants.

The GHQ-28 is consisting of four sub-scales. It takes about 5 minutes to answer the questions of the two subscales (depression and social dysfunction). It contains the necessary aspects to examine the psychological state of this group of people, compared to other questionnaires, it is considered short and easy on the patient and burden of the disease. It consists of four domains including: the first seven items 1-7 screening the somatization e.g. (Been having hot or cold spells), the second seven items 8-14 screening the insomnia and anxiety e.g. (Lost much sleep over worry), the third seven items 15-21 screening the social dysfunction e.g. (Felt capable of making decisions about things), and the last seven items 22-28 screening depressions e.g. (Felt that life is entirely hopeless). This instrument is structured based on previous studies some of these studies were conducted by Saja (2011), Tuhafy (2013) and Al-aboudy, (2023).^{11,12,13}. In this study the depression and social dysfunction sub scales has been chosen and applied.

According to the previous forms the scoring and rating include four points Likert scale applied for rating patient's social dysfunction and depression, the questionnaire comprises 14 items, 7 of these are a positive item (15,17,18,19,20,21) (e.g., Felt on the whole you were doing things well?), and 7 of this in a negative field (e.g., Been getting scared or panicky for no good reason?), with some positive items, the scale is: (Always, most time, sometime, and never) respectively. While negative items were (Never, some time, most time, and always) respectively, each question has four options to answer and the answer should be restricted in the last 2 weeks. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, cut off point symptomatic (mean 2.5 and more), asymptomatic (mean less than 2.5), significance was set at $p < 0.05$ and CI confidence interval estimated at the 95% level.

THE RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of the chronic renal failure patients

Demographic Data		f.	%
Gender	Male	17	43.6
	Female	22	56.4
	Total	39	100.0
Age	25-35	6	15.4
	36-45	14	35.9
	46-55	8	20.5
	56-65	4	10.3
	66 or more	7	17.9
	Total	39	100.0
	Residency	Rural	22
Urban		17	43.6
Total		39	100.0
Marital Status	Single	9	23.1
	Married	25	64.1
	Divorced	3	7.7
	Widow	2	5.1
	Total	39	100.0
Economic status	Not enough	13	33.3
	Enough to some extent	12	30.8
	Enough	14	35.9
	Total	39	100.0
Number of children	None	9	23.1
	1-5	16	41.0
	6-10	13	33.3
	11 or more	1	2.6
	Total	39	100.0
Family members Number	1-5	5	12.8
	6-10	27	69.2
	11-15	3	7.7
	16 or more	4	10.3
	Total	39	100.0
Educational level	Illiterate	13	33.3
	Can read	5	12.8
	Can read and write	4	10.3
	Primary	12	30.8
	Beclobrate	2	5.1
	Postgraduate degree	3	7.7
Total	39	100.0	

The demographic profile of the 39 individuals in the dataset is characterized by a slight majority of females (56.4%) compared to males (43.6%). Age distribution reveals a varied representation, with the majority falling in the 36-45 age group (35.9%), while rural residency slightly outnumbers urban residency (56.4% vs. 43.6%). The majority of individuals are married (64.1%), followed by singles (23.1%), divorced (7.7%), and widows (5.1%). Economic status is diverse, with roughly equal proportions reporting "not enough" (33.3%), "enough to some extent" (30.8%), and "enough" (35.9%). Family composition shows a prevalence of households with 6-10 members (69.2%), while educational backgrounds range from illiteracy (33.3%) to postgraduate degrees (7.7%). This comprehensive overview sets the stage for further analysis to explore potential relationships between these demographic factors and reported levels of depression.

Table 2. Patients' responses to the depression items

Items	Sum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Assessment
Started thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	105	2.692	.9774	Symptomatic
Felt that life is entirely hopeless?	103	2.641	.8732	Symptomatic
Felt that life isn't worth living?	114	2.923	.6234	Symptomatic
Thought of the possibility that you might make away with yourself?	97	2.487	1.3547	A Symptomatic
Found at times you couldn't do anything because your nerves were too bad?	99	2.538	.8222	Symptomatic
Found yourself wishing you were dead and away from it all?	91	2.333	.9823	A Symptomatic
Found that the idea of taking your own life kept coming into your mind?	81	2.076	1.2222	A Symptomatic

Symptomatic (mean more than 2.5), asymptomatic (mean 2.5 and less)

The results of the assessment based on items related to mental health reveal varying degrees of symptomatic thoughts among the individuals surveyed. Participants reported a moderate level of considering themselves as worthless (Mean = 2.692), feeling life is entirely hopeless (Mean = 2.641), and contemplating the worthiness of life itself (Mean = 2.923). Additionally, some individuals expressed a degree of suicidal ideation, with thoughts of making away with themselves (Mean = 2.487) and finding the idea of taking their own life recurring (Mean = 2.076). The standard deviations indicate a noteworthy degree of variability in responses, suggesting diversity in the severity of symptomatic experiences. These findings highlight the importance of further exploration and intervention in understanding and addressing mental health challenges within this population.

Table 3. Assessment of patients' overall responses to the social dysfunction items

Items	Sum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Assessment
Managing to keep yourself busy and occupied?	139	3.5641	.75376	symptomatic
Taking longer time over the things you do?	108	2.7692	1.08728	symptomatic
Felt on the whole you were doing things well?	87	2.2308	1.18013	A Symptomatic
Feeling satisfied with the way you've carried out your tasks?	95	2.4359	1.27310	A symptomatic
Felt you are playing a useful part in things?	132	3.3846	.93514	symptomatic
Felt capable of making decisions about things?	118	3.0256	.70663	symptomatic
Felt able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?	99	2.5385	1.02202	symptomatic

Symptomatic (mean 2.5 and more), asymptomatic (mean less than 2.5).

The assessment of various items related to daily functioning and satisfaction reveals nuanced experiences within the surveyed population. Notably, individuals report a symptomatic level in aspects such as keeping busy and occupied (Mean = 3.5641), playing a useful part in things (Mean = 3.3846), and feeling capable of making decisions (Mean = 3.0256). Conversely, there are indications of asymptomatic experiences, as reflected in responses related to feeling satisfied with tasks (Mean = 2.4359) and overall performance (Mean = 2.2308). The standard deviations across these items indicate variability in responses, highlighting diverse perceptions of daily activities and functioning. These findings underscore the complexity of individuals' subjective experiences in managing daily tasks and suggest potential areas for targeted interventions to enhance satisfaction and functioning in specific domains.

Table 4. Assessment of patients' overall responses to the social dysfunction domain items

	Levels	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Assessment
Social Failure Domain	A symptomatic	4	10.3	2.84	symptomatic
	symptomatic	35	89.7		
	Total	39	100		

Symptomatic (mean 2.5 and more), asymptomatic (mean less than 2.5)

The examination of the social failure domain indicates that within the sample of 39 individuals, 89.7% are classified as symptomatic, while 10.3% fall under the category of A symptomatic. The mean social failure level for the entire group is calculated at 2.84. This outcome suggests a predominant presence of symptomatic experiences related to social failure among the surveyed individuals, highlighting potential challenges in social functioning. The assessment categorizes a significant majority as symptomatic, emphasizing the importance of addressing and understanding social difficulties within the studied population. Further exploration and targeted interventions may be warranted to better support individuals facing social failure-related symptomatic challenges.

Table 5. Assessment of patients' overall responses to the depression domain items

	Levels	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Assessment
Depression Domain	symptomatic	20	51.3	2.52	Symptomatic
	Asymptomatic	19	48.7		
	Total	39	100		

Symptomatic (mean 2.5 and more), asymptomatic (mean less than 2.5)

The analysis of the depression domain reveals that among the 39 individuals surveyed, 51.3% are categorized as symptomatic, while 48.7% are classified as asymptomatic. The mean depression level for the entire sample is calculated at 2.52. This finding indicates a substantial portion of the participants experiencing symptomatic manifestations of depression, suggesting a noteworthy presence of depressive symptoms within the studied population. The assessment of symptomatic status provides valuable insights into the mental health landscape, underscoring the importance of further investigation and potential interventions to address and support individuals exhibiting depressive symptoms.

Table 6. Correlation between the Patients' Social dysfunction and their depression level

Studied domains	Statistical parameters	Social failure	Depression
Social dysfunction	Pearson Correlation	1	.079
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.634
Depression	Pearson Correlation	.219	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.180	

The results of the correlation analysis between studied domains, social failure, and depression suggest a minimal and statistically nonsignificant relationship between social dysfunction and depression, as indicated by a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.079 ($p = 0.634$). Additionally, the correlation between depression and social failure is moderate ($r = 0.219$, $p = 0.180$) but does not reach statistical significance. These findings imply that, within this study, social dysfunction does not exhibit a strong association with depression, and social failure shows only a modest and nonsignificant correlation with depressive symptoms. Further investigation and consideration of other potential contributing factors may be necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay between social aspects and depression in the studied domains.

DISCUSSION

The results of the demographic characteristics provide a comprehensive overview of the participants in the study. The majority of the sample comprises females, and the age distribution is diverse, with a significant representation in the 36-45 age group. The demographic profile also includes varied marital status, economic status, family size, and educational backgrounds.

This diverse profile is consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of considering various demographic factors in understanding mental health outcomes^{14,15}. For instance, gender differences in mental health have been well-documented, with women often facing higher rates of depression¹⁶. Additionally, socioeconomic factors, such as economic status and educational level, are known to influence mental health disparities¹⁷. Therefore, the demographic characteristics laid the foundation for a comprehensive analysis of mental health in the studied population.

The assessment of mental health, particularly in the social failure and depression domains, reveals nuanced experiences within the surveyed population. Individuals report varying degrees of symptomatic thoughts related to social failure, such as feelings of worthlessness and suicidal ideation. Similarly, the analysis of daily functioning and satisfaction indicates both symptomatic and asymptomatic experiences, emphasizing the complexity of subjective experiences in managing daily tasks. The assessment of mental health, particularly in the social failure and depression domains, provides valuable insights into the experiences of the participants. The findings suggest varying degrees of symptomatic thoughts related to social failure, highlighting the need for targeted interventions in addressing mental health challenges within this population. Similar studies have emphasized the importance of understanding and addressing mental health issues, as they can have profound implications for individuals' well-being and functioning^{18,19}. The nuanced experiences revealed in the assessment underscore the complexity of mental health, necessitating a holistic approach to intervention and support.

Social dysfunction result was symptomatic with mean result 2.8, in fact cause of this result may due to diseases stigmata of the disease such as dialysis procedure, change of face freshness, loss of desire and pleasure in things previously enjoyed, and other physical and psychosocial problems that share the impact on their relationship of family members and the community. Researchers have linked the social dysfunction with stigma and suggested that the stigma of chronic disease is linked to the risk of severe psychosocial and low level of performance towards self and society, which leads to isolation from society and dysfunction^{20,21}.

Depression domain result in this study is symptomatic which is a reasonable result that agree with most previous studies that handled psychological aspects of chronic renal failure. Depression is the most common psychological complication which has serious impact on the quality of life of hemodialysis patients, affecting negatively their psychological well-being, economic and social^{22,23}. Important aspects of the clinical course are highly related to depression, elevating mortality numbers, increasing hospital admissions numbers, reduced quality of life and reduced compliance with drugs.^{24,25}

However, the correlation analysis between social dysfunction and depression suggests a minimal and statistically nonsignificant relationship between these two domains. This finding implies that social dysfunction may not be a strong predictor of depressive symptoms within this study. It is important to note that the correlation analysis is limited to the variables measured in this study, and other factors not considered in the current research may contribute to the complex interplay between social aspects and depression.^{26,27}

Several factors could contribute to the observed results. Firstly, individual resilience and coping mechanisms may influence the impact of social dysfunction on depressive symptoms.²⁸ Additionally, social support, cultural factors, and environmental influences are known to play crucial roles in mental health outcomes and could contribute to the observed variability in responses.²⁹

The correlation analysis between social dysfunction and depression, while indicating a minimal and statistically nonsignificant relationship, prompts further exploration. Social factors, such as social support and interpersonal relationships, have been extensively studied in the context of mental health³⁰. However, the absence of a strong correlation in this study may suggest the presence of other influential factors that were not measured. Longitudinal research has shown that the relationship between social factors and mental health outcomes can be dynamic and context-dependent³¹. Therefore, the current findings emphasize the need for a more comprehensive investigation into the intricate interplay between social aspects and depression.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social dysfunction and depression, future research could consider incorporating additional variables such as social support, coping strategies, and cultural factors. Longitudinal studies could also provide insights into the dynamic nature of these relationships over time.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the demographic profile of the study participants paints a detailed picture of a population with diverse characteristics, encompassing gender, age, residency, marital status, economic status, family size, and educational background. Notably, a slight majority of females and a predominant representation in the 36-45 age group highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of

mental health within this context. The findings underscore the intricate interplay of demographic factors that may influence mental health outcomes, providing a robust foundation for further exploration of potential relationships between these demographics and reported levels of depression.

Turning to the mental health assessment, the results reveal a concerning prevalence of symptomatic experiences related to social failure and depression within the studied population. The individuals report moderate levels of thoughts such as worthlessness, hopelessness, and contemplation of life's worth, indicating a significant burden of depressive symptoms. Furthermore, the examination of social dysfunction and depression domains demonstrates a noteworthy presence of symptomatic experiences among participants. The majority falling under the symptomatic category emphasizes the urgent need for targeted interventions to address mental health challenges, especially in the realm of social functioning. These conclusions highlight the complexity of individuals' subjective experiences and stress the importance of comprehensive mental health support tailored to the specific challenges identified in the study.

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