

Psychological Impact of Early-Stage of Chronic Kidney Disease: A Qualitative Exploration

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ABSTRACT

Despite the alarming increase in the prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) worldwide due to high-risk factors, limited information is available on patients who experience consistent CKD progression. This study aimed to explore the psychological impact of early stage CKD in patients. This descriptive phenomenological study employed purposive and snowball sampling techniques to recruit 15 CKD patients (stages 1 and 2) from the outpatient department in one of the hospitals in Hail City, Saudi Arabia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews that lasted between 45 and 60 minutes each. The participants' consent for audio recording was obtained. Data were collected between March and April 2024. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview transcriptions. Four themes, including five subthemes, emerged from the verbatim accounts obtained from all 15 participants involved in this research. These themes are: (1) "Slow Creep," with a subtheme "The Range of Experiences in Early Stage CKD"; (2) "Balancing Act of Hope and Uncertainty," with subtheme "Navigating a New Reality"; (3) "Turning Point," with subtheme "Contributory Factors," and (4) "CKD Progression Patterns," with subthemes "Challenges Managing CKD" and "Hopes, Fears, and Living with Uncertainty." The findings show the "Slow Creep," which includes various experiences during initial diagnosis; the "Balancing Act of Hope and Uncertainty," where emotional contradictions were raised; the "Turning Point," marking an essential period in the progression of the illness; and lastly, "CKD Progression Patterns," which demonstrates how difficult it is for someone to manage uncertainty through one's emotions. The findings emphasize the necessity for early detection and intervention because many participants reported feeling alarming symptoms that were unfortunately ignored. Furthermore, the investigation underlined the descriptive characteristics of the suffering associated with CKD, including anxiety, depression, and fear. Healthcare providers should be prepared to meet these emotional support needs, considering them in a broad context.

Keywords: CKD progression, patterns, turning point, balancing act, Saudi Arabia, qualitative

Bahrain Med Bull 2026; 48 (2): 3102-3108

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