

Kidney News

July 2022 | Vol. 14, Number 7

Vaccination, Treatment Decisions Studied in Adults with Kidney Diseases during COVID-19

By Tracy Hampton



Two recent studies published in the *CJASN* address different aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic in adults with advanced kidney diseases: one examines whether prior COVID-19 vaccination affected the outcomes of individuals on dialysis who became infected with SARS-CoV-2 (1), and the other assesses the pandemic's impact on treatment decision-making for older patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) (2).

People with CKD or other severe chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness, and patients with kidney failure who rely on in-center hemodialysis face an elevated risk of becoming exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Research has shown that individuals undergoing hemodialysis have impaired immune responses to COVID-19 vaccines, but few studies have described the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccination in such patients.

To investigate, scientists conducted a multi-center observational study of patients who were receiving hemodialysis in London and who were regularly tested for COVID-19

during the period of vaccine rollout with Pfizer-BioNTech's mRNA-based BNT162b2 and AstraZeneca's adenovirus-based AZD1222. SARS-CoV-2 infection was identified in 1323 patients of different ethnicities (Asian/other, 30%; Black, 38%; and White, 32%), including 1047 (79%) unvaccinated, 86 (7%) after first-dose vaccination, and 190 (14%) after second-dose vaccination. Most patients who tested positive had a mild course of COVID-19, but 515 (39%) were hospitalized, and 172 (13%) died.

Results indicated that older age, diabetes, and immune suppression were associated with greater illness severity. After adjustments, prior two-dose vaccination was associated with a 75% lower risk of hospital admission and an 88% lower risk of death compared with no vaccination. The researchers found it notable that no loss of protection against COVID-19 was seen in patients older than 65 years or with increasing time since vaccination, and no difference was seen between vaccine types.

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Update on the Task Force on the Future of Nephrology Reimagining Nephrology Fellowship Training

By Mark Rosenberg

The ASN Task Force on the Future of Nephrology was charged in April 2022 to reconsider all aspects of the future of nephrology and determine how to best prepare nephrology fellows for the challenges and opportunities the future will bring. Consisting of a diverse cross-section of ASN members, the task force will provide recommendations to the ASN Council by September 2022. The timeline will meet the commitment made by ASN to the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), as these organizations determine what changes should be made to nephrology certification

and recertification (ABIM) and fellowship training program (ACGME) requirements. To learn more about the task force, its charge, and membership, please refer to the April and June 2022 *Kidney News* articles (1–3).

Through weekly meetings, the task force has received input from multiple stakeholders, including representatives from ABIM and ACGME, the ASN Workforce and Training Committee (WTC) leadership, and people with kidney diseases. As this work progresses, plans are in place to engage other stakeholders, such as nephrology fellows, training pro-

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