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Authors
Seres, David
McKeaveney, Clare
Slee, Adrian
et al.

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Identifying Malnutrition in End-stage Renal Disease (ESRD) (P12-037-19)

David Seres,1 Clare McKeaveney,2 Adrian Slee,3 Gary Adamson,4 Andrew Davenport,3 Ken Farrington,3 Denis Foque,6 Kamyar Kalantar-Zadeh,7 John Mallett,4 Peter Maxwell,2 Robert Mullan,8 Helen Noble, Samuel Porter,9 Joanne Shields,10 Miles Witham,11 and Joanne Reid2

1Columbia University Irving Medical Center; 2Queen’s University Belfast; 3University College London; 4Ulster University; 5University of Hertfordshire; 6Université de Lyon; 7University of California Irvine Medical Center; 8Northern Health and Social Care Trust; 9Bournemouth University; 10Belfast Trust; and 11Newcastle University and Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals

Objectives: Malnutrition and appetite disturbances, such as anorexia, are commonly reported amongst hemodialysis patients. Nutrition management is a complex issue in ESRD and greater understanding is needed into the associated clinical mediators in ESRD. However, there is currently limited data on anorexia and the pathophysiology framework involved.

The aim of this study was to assess the relationship between appetite score and associated clinical biomarkers as a means to identify malnutrition. This work is part of an ongoing international multicenter effort to better define and develop treatment strategies for cachexia in patients with ESRD.

Methods: A cross-sectional analysis study included 106 patients from two hemodialysis (HD) units within the United Kingdom (U.K.). Appetite score was assessed using the Functional Assessment of Anorexia/Cachexia Therapy (FAACT). Clinical bio-markers included Body Mass Index (BMI), Albumin and C-reactive protein (CRP). Correlations between FAACT and clinical bio-markers were determined using Spearman’s rho for non-normally distributed scales.

Results: There was no significant relationship between FAACT and albumin levels ($r = 0.14; P = 0.16$) or BMI ($r = 0.28; P = .19$). However, there was a moderate and significant negative correlation between FAACT and CRP levels ($r = 0.31; P < 0.001$) indicating an inverse relationship between appetite (e.g., decreased FAACT score) and CRP levels (e.g., higher inflammation).

Conclusions: We found a significant and incremental relationship between inflammation and anorexia which is supported by previous research. The FAACT may be a useful tool in identifying patients at higher risk of malnutrition-inflammation cachexia syndrome which has been associated with higher hospitalization and mortality rates. Nutritional status and inflammation are important aspects of clinical practice in ESRD. A more focused approach to anorexia in ESRD is warranted.

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