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HIGH SYMPTOM BURDEN AMONG A PROSPECTIVE HEMODIALYSIS COHORT:

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Hemodialysis patients experience various symptoms ensuing from uremia, advanced age, co-existing comorbidities, and medications. While these symptoms may negatively impact health-related quality of life, they are oftentimes under-recognized and under-treated in dialysis patients.

Among 122 hemodialysis patients from the prospective *Malnutrition, Diet, and Racial Disparities in Kidney Disease* cohort recruited across 16 outpatient dialysis clinics, we administered a protocolized instrument, the Dialysis Symptom Index (DSI), assessing dialysis-related symptoms over the period of 7/2020-8/2020. Using this 30-item validated tool, symptom severity was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, with each component ranging 0-5 (score range 0-150; higher scores indicating greater severity).

In the overall cohort, the mean±SD and median (IQR) DSI severity scores were 28±21 and 24 (11, 36), respectively. Across the 30-item symptom survey, the most prevalent self-reported symptoms included feeling tired/lack of energy (71%), dry skin (61%), itching (42%), muscle cramps (42%), and numbness/tingling in feet (41%). Patients also reported a high frequency of gastrointestinal issues (i.e., constipation, nausea/vomiting, decreased appetite), mental/emotional symptoms (i.e., difficulty concentrating, worried/anxious, nervous, irritable, sad), sleep disturbances, and pain (i.e., bone/joint, chest, muscle) (Figure).

Our study uncovered a high prevalence of symptoms in a well-defined prospective hemodialysis cohort. Further studies are needed to identify modifiable and non-modifiable determinants of symptom burden, as well as their downstream sequelae in dialysis patients.

