Publication Brief

Long-Term Survival for Hemodialysis Patients Differ in Japan Versus Europe and the USA. What Might the Reasons Be?
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BACKGROUND
Multiple studies over the course of several decades show that Japanese patients live longer on dialysis than HD patients from North America and Europe. It has been noted that HD patients in the United States (US) are older and have a higher prevalence of co-morbid conditions such as diabetes mellitus (DM) and cardiac disease when compared to HD patients in other countries. Variation in demographic and comorbid conditions only partially explain the observed differences in mortality between Japan and other countries.

OBJECTIVE
To outline some of the differences between Japanese HD patients and patients from other countries; explore factors that may contribute to better survival in Japan, including practice patterns during the dialysis treatments in order to take advantage of differences that exist between regions and identify key practice patterns that could be optimized to improve the limited survival that exists for HD patients.

CONCLUSIONS
• Comorbid differences between Japanese HD patients and HD patients from other countries do not fully explain the superior survival seen in Japanese HD patients.
• Differences in practice patterns likely contribute:
  • Greater prevalence of AV fistula as access and far fewer catheters in Japan, longer treatment times
  • Slower ultrafiltration rates;
  • Meticulous attention to minimizing micro air emboli during treatments.
• Cultural differences that may favor survival as well, as Japanese patients are much more likely to:
  • Stay for the full treatment times of their dialysis prescription;
  • adhere to dietary recommendations and avoid eating high-fat foods prior to and during HD treatments.

REFERENCES