

# A national study of practice patterns in UK renal units in the use of dialysis and conservative kidney management to treat people aged 75 years and over with chronic kidney failure

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## Plain English summary

CKMAPPS – patterns of conservative care in UK renal units

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## Plain English summary

Some older frail adults with stage 5 chronic kidney disease (CKD5) choose conservative kidney management (CKM) rather than dialysis. Dialysis can impose a heavy treatment burden and it is also resource-intensive with a high cost to the NHS. Little is known about patients' and staff views of CKM or how CKM is provided. This study aimed to determine the practice patterns for the CKM of older adults with CKD5 in the UK.

Older adults with CKD5 and their renal staff were interviewed. Some patients had never heard of CKM. Others who had chosen CKM had little knowledge of how their disease would progress. Staff wanted more training to help them discuss CKM with patients.

Interviews helped to develop a questionnaire sent to all UK renal units, asking about how CKM was delivered. All units accepted CKM but there was variation in the definition of CKM, the number of CKM patients and how CKM was delivered. Some units had dedicated clinics and/or funding for CKM.

Finally, general practitioners (GPs) were interviewed. GPs said that they needed guidance about when to refer older patients with other conditions. Most had limited experience of caring for CKM patients.

There is a need for agreement on the definition of CKM. Research needs to establish the benefits and risks of CKM compared with dialysis and to clarify which patients might benefit most from CKM. This would help improve training for staff, inform patients in making treatment choices and support commissioners and providers in improving services.

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