

Experiences of patients who have participated in a chosen arts or creative living activity whilst receiving in-centre haemodialysis: a qualitative study

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Introduction

A major challenge for patients receiving haemodialysis is the considerable impact on daily living as a result of the time investment for dialysis. Patients often experience fatigue, low mood, anxiety, depression and boredom, in addition to medical complications due to limited renal functions [1-3]. There is increasing interest in the potentially considerable health benefits, particularly psychological, of arts and creative living activities for people living with chronic diseases, including patients receiving haemodialysis. However, there is very little evidence, particularly from the patient perspective, of the effect and value of arts and creative living activities [4], and a dearth of evidence in dialysis populations. An NHS Hospital Trust charity has been offering arts and creative living activities since 2018 to patients on haemodialysis, delivered by tutors at the bedside. It is a unique scheme, as patients are offered a wide choice of activities - including drawing, painting, sculpture, creative writing, languages and IT/screen-based skills - rather than only one type of activity. This study seeks to address the evidence gap by investigating,

- Experiences of patients who have participated in the arts and creative living activities
- Perceived positive or negative effects

Methods

A qualitative design in the interpretive tradition [5] was employed for the study because of the key benefits of enabling insights into participants' perceptions and opinions, and better understanding of the reasons for their experiences. The setting was an NHS Hospital Trust with three dialysis units. Individual semi-structured interviews [6] were undertaken with a purposive sample of adult patients who had experienced an arts or creative living activity in the last 15 months, until saturation (anticipated 15-20 interviews), and all tutors (n=5). Diversity was sought in the patient sample in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, dialysis unit, activities experienced, and level of activity participation. Data has been analysed using inductive and deductive principles.

Results

Uptake of creative activities and feedback has cut across diverse patient groups. Early study findings indicate a positive response from patient participants to their chosen arts or creative living activities. Activities were perceived to have therapeutic value not only while being undertaken whilst receiving haemodialysis, but more generally for living as a haemodialysis patient. Patients reported the learning process and undertaking the activities improved their mood; their focus was on the activity and not the boredom and limitations of haemodialysis. Longer-term benefits were reported as increased confidence and motivation to take part in other activities and hobbies outside the dialysis centre.

Discussion

The study results will be used to understand the effects, including psychological, for patients taking part in a chosen arts or creative living activity whilst receiving haemodialysis, and assess aspects of the scheme that may require modification or change. Providing patients with a choice of activities may have an impact not only on uptake, but also on subsequent feedback. Further analysis is required to determine whether the

option of creative activities whilst receiving haemodialysis additionally improves dialysis attendance. The findings will have value for other services considering implementing such schemes.