

HEARING LOSS IS COMMON IN PATIENTS WITH MODERATE CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

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(New York, NY) – Older adults with moderate chronic kidney disease (CKD) have a higher prevalence of hearing loss than those of the same age without CKD, according to a new report published today in the *American Journal of Kidney Diseases*, the official journal of the National Kidney Foundation.

An Australian research team assessed over 2,900 individuals aged 50 and older, including 513 with moderate chronic kidney disease (defined as a glomerular filtration rate or a measure of kidney function that is below 60). Of those with CKD, over 54% reported some level of hearing loss compared to only 28% of the rest of the group. Nearly 30% of the CKD participants showed severe hearing loss compared with only 10% of the non-CKD participants.

Hearing loss is commonly linked to syndromal kidney disease. However, this study suggests a strong tie to CKD in general, said study author Professor David Harris, Associate Dean of Sydney Medical School - Westmead at the University of Sydney. The link can be explained by structural and functional similarities between tissues in the inner ear and in the kidney. Additionally, toxins that accumulate in kidney failure can damage nerves, including those in the inner ear. Another reason for this connection is that kidney disease and hearing loss share common risk factors, including diabetes, high blood pressure and advanced age."

These findings could lead to a modification of the usual care of people with CKD, said Dr. Kerry Willis, Senior Vice President of Scientific Activities at the National Kidney Foundation. Earlier clinical hearing assessments and fitting of hearing aids in CKD patients can improve quality of life and lead to better management of underlying conditions which could, in turn, potentially preserve hearing function.

The National Kidney Foundation is dedicated to preventing and treating kidney and urinary tract diseases, improving the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by these diseases and increasing availability of all organs for transplantation. For more information on chronic kidney disease visit www.kidney.org.