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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Employment status in peritoneal-dialysis patients



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KEYWORDS

automated peritoneal dialysis;
chronic kidney disease;
employment;
peritoneal dialysis

Abstract *Background/Purpose:* The employment status of peritoneal-dialysis patients could have been related to selection bias. This study examined the employment rate and associated factors in a population with peritoneal-dialysis-first policy.

Methods: We performed a single-center cross-sectional survey on the employment status of prevalent peritoneal-dialysis patients between January and September 2013 in Hong Kong.

Results: The survey included 383 prevalent peritoneal-dialysis patients, with 128 of them in the labor force. Among the patients in the labor force, the employment rates were 65.8% and 18.9% for automated peritoneal-dialysis patients and continuous-ambulatory-peritoneal-dialysis patients, respectively, whereas 39.1% of patients in the labor force had expressed that they were able to work, but were unemployed. In adjusted analysis, the use of automated peritoneal dialysis (adjusted odds ratio of 7.93; 95% confidence interval 2.92–21.74) was independently associated with employment, whereas older age was associated with lower likelihood of employment (adjusted odds ratio of 0.53 for each 10 years old; 95% confidence interval 0.38–0.72).

Conclusion: The employment rate in peritoneal-dialysis patients is very low when compared to that in the general population. Patients on automated peritoneal dialysis were more likely to be employed.

背景: 腹膜透析患者就業狀況的研究, 有可能會受到選擇性偏倚的影響。這項調查是在一個採納了「腹膜透析第一」政策的地區, 進行就業率及其相關因素的研究。

方法: 在2013年1月至9月期間, 我們在香港一個腹膜透析中心對現存的腹膜透析患者的就業狀況進行了一次橫斷面調查。

結果: 本次調查包括383名現存的腹膜透析患者, 其中有128人被納入勞動力人口。在勞動力人口的患者中, 自動腹膜透析的使用者就業率為65.8%, 連續性家居腹膜透析的使用者就業率為18.9%。另一方面, 39.1%的勞動力人口患者, 表示他們有能力工作, 但並未受僱用。在調整後的分析, 使用自動腹膜透析與就業率有獨立關聯, 另外, 較年長的患者與較低就業率有關聯。

結論: 相比一般香港人, 腹膜透析患者的就業率非常低。自動腹膜透析的患者較易就業。

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Introduction

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a public-health problem worldwide, affecting 13.6% of the population in the United States and 12.5% of the population in Canada.^{1,2} Between 11% and 12% of Chinese are suffering from CKD of various stages.^{3,4}

Among patients with CKD, low employment is a long-standing problem, and particularly worse in patients receiving dialysis.^{5–8} This employment problem applies also to young adults aged 18–30 years.⁹ In Europe and in the United States, Stage 5 CKD patients of working age have employment rates ranging from 18.9% to 47.8%, depending on the type of renal replacement therapy; patients with successful kidney transplant have the best employment rate, whereas home-dialysis patients have better employment rates than that of conventional in-center hemodialysis.^{10–14} Loss in productivity implied a substantial indirect cost, and has been estimated to be €5537 per person/year of working age.¹⁴ Previous studies on unemployment indicated a significant adverse effect of unemployment on psychological problems, including anxiety and depression, as well as elevated inflammatory biomarkers.^{15,16} However, data are lacking for effective strategies to facilitate employment of dialysis patients.

We performed a cross-sectional analysis of peritoneal-dialysis patients to provide clinicians with estimates of employment rate of prevalent peritoneal-dialysis patients, and to assess the characteristics that predict employment status.

Methods

This cross-sectional survey enrolled 383 prevalent patients aged 18 or older and receiving peritoneal dialysis at our center from January to September 2013.

Patients who met the inclusion criteria were defined to be persons in the labor force if they were of working age (18–60 years), after excluding housewives. Unemployment rate was defined as the proportion of unemployed persons in the labor force.

A structured clinical interview was conducted to collect data on the employment and health status of prevalent peritoneal-dialysis patients during clinic visits. Patients' self-reporting employment status was categorized into five different groups: work full time, work part-time, housewife, retirement, and not working. Patients were also classified into four different groups according to their self-reporting health status: normal, nearly normal with minor signs or symptoms, care for self only or require some assistance, and disabled. The baseline demographic information and laboratory results were confirmed by a review of medical records.

Statistical analyses were performed by using the SPSS, IBM version 21 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). Numerical data are expressed in mean \pm standard deviation. Percentages were compared by means of Fisher's exact test or Chi-square test where appropriate. A univariate analysis followed by multivariate logistic regression was performed to test the association between each parameter and employment status. Variables with a significant univariate test at

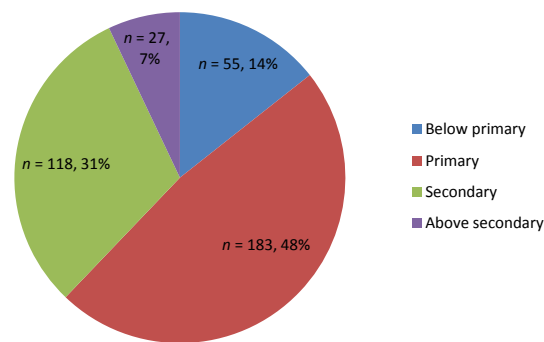


Figure 1 Education level of prevalent peritoneal-dialysis patients.

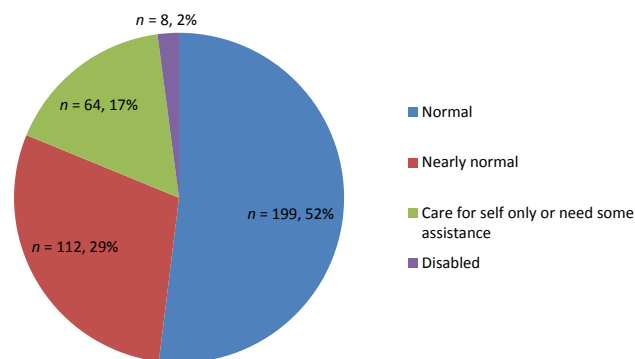


Figure 2 Health status of prevalent peritoneal-dialysis patients.

the 0.25 level were selected for the multivariate analysis. A two-tailed p value of <0.05 was regarded as statistically significant.

Results

Of the 383 prevalent peritoneal-dialysis patients, 202 were male (52.7%) and the average age was 60 ± 12 years. About half of them (49.9%) had diabetes mellitus. The average duration on peritoneal dialysis was 3.6 years, and 58 patients (15.1%) received automated peritoneal dialysis. **Figures 1 and 2** summarize the education level and self-reported health status of the 383 peritoneal-dialysis patients. More than half of the patients (62.1%) had primary or lower education level. At least three-quarters of them reported a normal or nearly normal health status.

One hundred and twenty-four (32.4%) of the surveyed participants were housewives, whereas only 8.6% of the patients were full-time employed and 4.4% of the patients were part-time employed. Ninety-eight participants (25.6%) were retired.

We then analyzed 128 peritoneal-dialysis patients in the labor force, namely, those of working age (18–60 years), after excluding housewives. In this cohort of patients in the labor force, the mean age was 50 ± 9 years, 73.4% were male, and 43.8% had diabetes mellitus. The average duration on peritoneal dialysis was 3.1 years. Thirty-eight of them (29.7%) in the labor force were using automated peritoneal dialysis. The unemployment rate was 87.2%. In

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