

What's your lifetime risk of developing kidney failure?

August 16 2012

How likely are middle-aged adults to develop kidney failure during their lifetime? A study appearing in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (JASN)* provides some insights, which may be used to help set priorities related to kidney care and to increase public interest in the prevention of kidney disease.

[Kidney failure](#) takes a significant toll on both individuals and the public as a whole, causing [poor health](#) in patients and generating considerable [health care costs](#). Despite kidney failure's impact, researchers don't have a good estimate of people's likelihood of developing it over their lifetime.

To find out, from 1997 to 2008 Tanvir Chowdhury Turin, MD, PhD, Brenda Hemmelgarn, MD, PhD (University of Calgary, in Alberta, Canada), and their colleagues studied 2,895,521 adult Alberta residents who were free of kidney failure at the start of the study. "Given the high morbidity and cost associated with kidney failure, we wanted to quantify the burden of disease for kidney failure in an easily understandable index to communicate information for patients, health practitioners, and policy makers," said Dr. Turin.

Among the major findings:

- Approximately 1 in 40 men and 1 in 60 women of middle age will develop kidney failure if they live into their 90s. This

equates to a 2.66% risk of kidney failure for men and a 1.76% risk for women.

- The risk is higher in people with reduced [kidney function](#) (men: 7.51% and women: 3.21%) compared with people with relatively preserved kidney function (men: 1.01% and women: 0.63%).
- The [lifetime risk](#) of kidney failure is consistently higher for men at all ages and kidney function levels, compared with women.

The authors note that the actual current life expectancy is approximately 80 years, which changes the risks somewhat. "The observed probabilities indicate that, if the current estimates remains unchanged, approximately 1 in 93 (or approximately 1%) of men and 1 in 133 (or 0.8%) of women of middle age might develop kidney failure in their lifetime in Alberta, Canada," said Dr. Hemmelgarn.

More information: The article, entitled "Lifetime Risk of End-Stage Renal Disease," will appear online on August 16, 2012, [doi: 10.1681/ASN.2012020164](#)

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

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