

Early sign of kidney disease often ignored, study says

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Doctors can easily test for excess protein in urine.

(HealthDay)—Too much protein in your urine—an early sign of kidney disease and a risk factor for heart disease—often goes undetected and untreated, a new study finds.

Researchers also found that many people with this problem, called proteinuria, reported taking common over-the-counter pain medicines called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), which can harm [kidney function](#).

Researchers tested nearly 300 patients who were admitted to a hospital in Albany, N.Y., and one in Chicago. Forty percent were found to have proteinuria, but just 37 percent of those with the condition were being treated for it.

One third of patients with proteinuria had [high blood pressure](#), but only 43 percent of them were being treated with an anti-proteinuric [high blood pressure](#) drug. Another important finding was that 41 percent of patients with proteinuria said they took NSAIDs, according to the study presented at a National Kidney Foundation meeting.

Several medications can be used to treat proteinuria, including angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs), the researchers noted.

"We were very surprised by the findings," study leader Dr. Vishesh Kumar, a resident at Albany Medical College, said in a kidney foundation news release.

Proteinuria is very common and it's easy to fix," he said. "And it's being ignored."

The findings are scheduled for presentation this week at the annual meeting of the National Kidney Foundation in Las Vegas.

"We've known for years that ACE inhibitors and ARBs slow the progression of kidney damage. But we were surprised by the fact that over 60 percent of the patients we looked at with confirmed proteinuria were not taking any of these drugs. We can have a major impact on reducing proteinuria in these patients," Kumar said.

He added that the finding that many patients with proteinuria were taking NSAIDs offers a "huge opportunity" for intervention.

Urine testing for [proteinuria](#) is simple and should be done in people at highest risk, including those who are older than 60 and anyone with diabetes or high blood pressure, or a family history of [kidney failure](#), according to the National Kidney Foundation.

Research presented at meetings is typically considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases has more about [proteinuria](#).

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