

State rules affect survival of immigrants with kidney failure

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(HealthDay)—How states treat undocumented immigrants with kidney

failure affects their health—including, in some cases, whether they live or die, a new study has found.

The states involved in the study—California, Colorado and Texas—have different guidelines on the treatment such patients should be given.

In California, undocumented immigrants with kidney failure receive scheduled, outpatient dialysis three times a week. Those in Colorado and Texas can get dialysis only when critically ill.

The study found that undocumented immigrants who didn't receive regular dialysis were more likely to die than those who got it.

The research involved 211 undocumented immigrants with kidney failure who were treated at Denver Health Medical Center, San Francisco General Hospital or Harris Health in Houston. The patients were treated between January 2010 and July 2014.

During that time, 42 of the immigrants received scheduled outpatient dialysis and 169 received emergency-only dialysis. Deaths numbered 38 among those given emergency-only care, compared with four of those who got regular dialysis, the researchers reported.

"No one should have to give up their life because access to life-saving dialysis is restricted," the lead researcher, Dr. Lilia Cervantes, said in a news release from the Denver Health Medical Center. Her interest in the research stemmed from personal experience with a patient who she said chose to stop receiving treatment rather than go through the repeated emergency-only treatments.

Cervantes is a physician at Denver Health and associate professor of medicine at the Colorado University School of Medicine.

The study also found that people given emergency-only dialysis spent more time in the hospital than those on regular dialysis.

"The life and death nature of emergency-only [dialysis](#) demands that we establish national policies guiding care for undocumented immigrants with end-stage renal disease," or kidney [failure](#), Cervantes said.

In the United States, about 6,500 [undocumented immigrants](#) have [kidney failure](#), according to the researchers.

The study was published online Dec. 18 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

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

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