

Conservative Care of Kidney Failure: Information for Health Professionals

Treatment Choices for End Stage Kidney Failure (ESRF) version 1

Why does this matter?

Following a diagnosis of advanced kidney failure patients will need to make decisions about their future treatment, with the support of their family and professional carers. Your patient has discussed their options with the York Renal Team and has decided that **Conservative Treatment** is the best option for them **at this time**.

What treatments options are available?

There are 2 treatment options for end stage kidney failure – renal replacement therapy (which might include either dialysis or kidney transplantation) or conservative management. Not all of these options are possible in every patient– for example only about 1 in 3 patients who is suitable for dialysis is also suitable for transplantation.

What is Conservative Treatment of ESRF?

This option involves all the components of active management that would be considered for any patient with advanced kidney disease, with the exception of starting renal replacement therapy. There is a large potential for alleviating the symptoms of advanced kidney disease using drug therapy including treatments for breathlessness/fluid retention, anaemia, itch, nausea and pain. The Renal Team at York Hospital would remain involved in supporting patients, carers and health care professionals, including offering the same psychosocial support for patients and carers that would be available to dialysis patients. This involves nutritional advice, counselling, social work advice and pharmacy support as part of a robust care package for conservatively managed patients.

What does this mean for your patient in practice?

Ultimately ESRF is a terminal condition, but many patients have other co-morbid conditions that also need active management. Death from uraemia is not a sudden occurrence but usually associated with a slow decline in health. The outlook for people managed with conservative therapy can be many months or even years and is often determined by their co-morbid disease. During this time some may continue to work and travel. Regular outpatient clinic visits will monitor their condition and augment the support packages at home.

People who have made the choice of Conservative Treatment should be put on the Palliative Care Registers within their practice and managed appropriately.

Where can I get more information?

This information was adapted from the Kidney Alliance website, Conservative/Supportive Management of ESRF <http://www.kidneyalliance.org/docs/foursix.htm>

A patient information leaflet describing these choices is available:-

<http://www.britishkidney-pa.co.uk/patient-info>

Patient choices decision aid: <http://sdm.rightcare.nhs.uk/pda/established-kidney-failure/>

Please contact the Renal Team at York Hospital if you need more help:

The consultants can be contacted via their secretaries using the details on patient letters.

The renal specialist nurses can be contacted on 01904 725486 / 721325 during normal working hours.