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“Are Your Kidneys Ok?”

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On the occasion of the World Kidney Day on March 13, 2025, the World Kidney Day Joint Steering Committee, a joint initiative of The International Society of Nephrology and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations - World Kidney Alliance, shared a scientific editorial entitled “Are Your Kidneys OK? Detect Early to Protect Kidney Health.” It reinforces the importance of early identification of kidney disease to prevent or slow its progression and related complications, thus reducing mortality. They recommend using serum creatinine to estimate renal function and urinary albumin or proteinuria by dipstick to diagnose renal and endothelial damage, thereby evaluating the causes and risk factors of chronic kidney disease (CKD). This approach also involves measuring blood pressure and body mass index to reduce the incidence of kidney disease worldwide. Early-stage CKD is often asymptomatic and can only be easily detected if it is suspected. On the other hand, there are barriers such as the unequal allocation of resources, the poor funding of medical care and health infrastructure, and the low awareness of kidney disease among healthcare professionals and the general population, which make its diagnosis difficult.

CKD affects approximately 10% of the world’s population, with 80% residing in developing countries. The prevalence has increased in recent decades in line with global population growth and the obesity epidemic, which increases the incidence of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure, two important risk factors for CKD, mainly in adults. In children, the risk factors are premature birth, intrauterine growth retardation, congenital anomalies of the kidney and urinary tract, a history of acute kidney injury, autoimmune diseases, hereditary diseases (Alport syndrome, polycystic kidney disease), and oncological diseases. Undetected and untreated CKD progresses more rapidly to kidney failure and requires dialysis, which increases morbidity and mortality.

There are three levels of prevention: primary prevention reduces the incidence of CKD by treating risk factors, secondary prevention reduces progression, and tertiary prevention optimizes the treatment of renal failure, such as dialysis. Primary and secondary prevention strategies include promoting a healthy diet, adequate hydration, regular physical activity, monitoring blood pressure, and avoiding nephrotoxic substances, particularly in individuals with risk factors.

Early detection enables intervention to slow progression by modifying lifestyle, adopting an interdisciplinary approach, and

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administering renoprotectan medications such as angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors or angiotensin receptor blockers. These drugs reduce progression to more advanced stages of CKD and prevent the complications it causes, reducing hospitalization and the costs this entails, especially for countries with fewer resources.

Coordinated efforts are essential to raise awareness and train the healthcare team to identify patients at risk of CKD and initiate early renal protection to prevent progression to advanced stages.

The full text of the document can be found at the following link: https://www.kidney-international.org/article/S0085-2538(24)00917-7/fulltext