Renal Disease in Scotland

A strategy for future management

Cross Party Group on Kidney Disease
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the consultations with patients and the preparation and publication of this report.
SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the key recommendations made by the Cross Party Group for the improvement of renal services in Scotland. Fuller recommendations, together with the timings for the delivery of these, are contained in the body of the report.

• The Scottish Executive Health Department should, within eighteen months, develop a National Plan for renal services. The plan should incorporate national standards and targets based on best evidence.

• The Scottish Executive Health Department should immediately establish a National Clinical Network for Renal Disease to develop the National Plan and oversee its implementation.

• NHS Boards should develop Local Renal Networks based initially on the 10 adult renal units. These networks should be directly responsible for developing and prosecuting plans in accordance with the standards and targets in the National Plan.

• An appropriately funded quality assurance programme should be established and monitored by the Scottish Renal Registry (SRR).

• All stakeholders including patients should be involved at all levels of service planning and in the production and implementation of the National Plan.

• Sufficient support and education should be provided for all patients approaching established renal failure to enable them to make fully informed choices about treatment modality.

• All patients should be able to choose freely between different types of dialysis, and there should be flexibility about the choice of dialysis shifts for patients receiving hospital-based treatments.

• All units should have IT systems that can report data directly to the SRR for audit and quality improvement. This should be part of the integrated electronic records system.

• The length of the dialysis day should not be extended by avoidable delays before starting and after finishing dialysis. Patients should expect to start and finish dialysis at specified times.

• For those on hospital-based treatments, the length of the dialysis day should be minimised by efficient transport to and from the centre.

• All renal units should provide an efficient service for access surgery capable of delivering surgery reliably on a pre-arranged day.

• Patients on renal replacement therapy (RRT) should have ready access to the support provided by the multi-disciplinary team, including trained renal social workers.

• Hospital-based dialysis should be delivered in a pleasant non-institutional environment close to the patient’s home.

• Scottish renal units should have sufficient hospital haemodialysis stations to provide visiting patients with dialysis. These stations should be available to patients who need to dialyse away from their base unit for reasons of work or pleasure.
• There should be a sustained increase in hospital dialysis stations sufficient to provide haemodialysis for all who would benefit from it, regardless of location. Dialysis units should be run at optimal operating levels, estimated to be 80% of available dialysis stations.

• There should be a regular national review of dialysis facilities by the National Clinical Network for Renal Disease.

• All provider organisations should establish outpatient clinics for patients approaching renal failure that provide integrated “one stop” access to services and staff.

• Patients should be given full educational, social and psychological support to ensure they are sufficiently informed about their condition to take an active part in management.

• All patients should be provided with a care plan containing objectives of treatment. This should meet all the Renal Association guidelines for control of anaemia and other consequences of kidney failure.

• All dialysis units should, within two years, have sufficient specialist renal social workers to meet the British Renal Society (BRS) guidelines.

• A non-heart beating cadaver organ donation programme should be initiated immediately.

• Sufficient specialised nephrologists, surgeons and renal recipient transplant co-ordinators should be available to deliver renal transplant services. This will require increases in all workforce areas.

• Renal units should have sufficient consultant and non-consultant grade medical staff to deliver a patient-centred renal replacement therapy service.

• Staffing levels should be monitored by the National Clinical Network for Renal Disease as one of its quality assurance measures.

• A framework for renal nursing should immediately be developed for Scotland. Clinical competencies and training should be standardised.

• A comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy should immediately be developed to ensure renal nursing is featured at pre-registration stage and is recognised within general nursing.

• There should be greater flexibility in defining roles in renal nursing to allow some of the current activities of renal nurses to be undertaken by other appropriately trained staff.

• Local renal networks should document the workload required to treat patients with acute renal failure and integrate the results into the required dialysis services.

• The National Clinical Network for Renal Disease should immediately establish a working party to develop a National Plan for the identification and management of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD).

• NHS Board-established Local Renal Networks should develop plans to implement the National Renal Strategy on CKD.

• A SIGN guideline should be developed to cover the identification and management of CKD.

• Funding should be provided for a small number of pilot projects for the management of CKD. These should link primary and secondary care and other relevant professionals.

• All patients known to have CKD should be entered into a locally-agreed disease care plan.

• All patients with CKD and an estimated creatinine clearance of less than 30 ml/min or with worsening kidney function should be referred to a nephrologist to avoid the risk of late referral.

• Information technology systems should allow automatic transfer of the results of blood tests on all patients known to the renal unit from the laboratory where that patient’s blood tests are processed.

• The National Clinical Network for Renal Disease should develop a research strategy as an integral part of the National Plan.

• The National Clinical Network for Renal Disease should include the care of paediatric patients within its remit.

• An additional National Clinical Network for Paediatric Renal Disease should be established immediately. Its work should be integrated with the National Clinical Network for Renal Disease.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Cross Party Group on Kidney Disease (CPG) in the Scottish Parliament was formed in response to growing concerns about the ability of the NHS to treat the increasing amount of renal disease in the Scottish population, together with evidence that the situation is likely to deteriorate markedly unless strategic plans are made to prevent it. The CPG published an analysis of the current situation, highlighting 22 challenges for the future in February 2003. Its key findings are set out in Box One overleaf. This second report makes recommendations as to how these challenges might be met.

2.2 The CPG is committed to the provision of excellent and equitable treatment of renal disease across Scotland. Even so, great care has been taken to ensure that the recommendations contained here are realistic, achievable and, where possible, evidence-based. There will be a need for increased resources but only within the context of improved efficiency of service delivery. This requires comprehensive staff training and a commitment to continuous quality improvement focused on the needs of the patients and those that care for them. The responsibility for achieving this will rest with staff, patients and those responsible for funding renal services.
3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Renal disease is a major challenge for healthcare delivery programmes throughout the world because of the steadily rising number of patients with established kidney failure and the enormous cost of treating them. The number of patients using renal replacement therapy (RRT) is increasing annually (see Table 1). In 1993, 432 patients per million population (pmp) were receiving renal replacement in Scotland, a figure that had increased to 694 pmp by 2003 and is expected to approach 1,000 pmp within the next ten years. The incidence of patients starting dialysis in Scotland is now close to the European average. An ageing population poses additional problems because the incidence of renal failure increases with age.

Table 1: Different Proportions of Modes of Treatment and the Increasing Number of Patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hospital HD</th>
<th>Home HD</th>
<th>CAPD</th>
<th>APD</th>
<th>Transplant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>311</td>
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<td>133</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>642</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1012</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1277</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1602</td>
<td>3286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 The NHS in Scotland has responded to challenges by expanding facilities for treating patients with established renal failure by dialysis and transplantation. The history of the current facilities and how they came to be developed were documented in the first CPG report. There are 11 renal units (one paediatric and 10 adult) in Scotland with 12 associated satellite dialysis units. Two of the adult renal units and the paediatric unit carry out transplantation.

Box 2: Renal Units in Scotland

- Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
- Crosshouse Hospital
- Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary
- Glasgow Royal Infirmary
- Monklands Hospital
- Ninewells Hospital
- Queen Margaret’s Hospital
- Raigmore Hospital
- Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh
- Western Infirmary, Glasgow
- Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow

A full list of the renal units and their associated satellites and outreach clinics is given on the Scottish Renal Registry website - http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/srr/

3.3 Scottish renal units have always collaborated closely and in 1978, they established the Scottish Renal Association (SRA) and subsequently the Scottish Renal Registry (SRR). In 1994 the SRR began auditing performance of renal units against evidence-based standards developed by the UK Renal Association. In 1998 the Registry initiated peer review of renal units by teams that included patient representatives. This rigorous quality assurance system was subsequently formalised by NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (NHS QIS - formerly the CSBS) which introduced 14 specific standards for renal and transplant units to achieve. The Standard headings are set out in Box 3.

Box 3: QIS Scotland - Standards for Renal Services

- Standard 1: Haemodialysis
- Standard 2: Peritoneal Dialysis
- Standard 3: Haemoglobin in Patients on Dialysis
- Standard 4: Dialysis Access
- Standard 5: Nutritional Status
- Standard 6: Drug Therapy
- Standard 7: Access to Multidisciplinary Team
- Standard 8: Assessment for Transplantation
- Standard 9: Kidney Retrieval
- Standard 10: Survival Rates
- Standard 11: Out-patients
- Standard 12: Provision of Patient Information
- Standard 13: Transportation for Haemodialysis
- Standard 14: Audit: Information/Data Collection

3.4 The NHS QIS published its report *Adult Renal Services: A National Overview* in March 2003. This documented the ability of the Scottish renal and transplant units to attain the 14 standards and provided clear evidence of both successes and failures. The full document may be found at: http://www.clinicalstandards.org/pdf/natoverview/renal.pdf
Almost all units were able to provide an adequate quality of dialysis to meet the UK Renal Association standards for individual patients. Yet, despite this success, the NHS QIS report graphically illustrates the extent to which units are operating beyond their capacity. Consequently, most units were unable to deliver a flexible and patient-centred service, for example, in respect of treatment modality. Many patients and their carers did not receive sufficient support from multidisciplinary teams, who are working under intense pressure - causing difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff. There is evidence that Scottish services for renal failure still compare unfavourably with those in other developed countries - the numbers of patients starting dialysis with temporary dialysis lines and lacking other proper preparation, an increased death rate and inflexibility with holiday dialysis, are examples here. Scottish patients and their families are, therefore, still receiving a sub-standard service and enduring unnecessary suffering.

The need to concentrate on providing enough dialysis stations over the past ten years has necessarily, but regretfully, meant that prevention has taken a back seat. Many diseases, including hypertension, diabetes and urinary tract obstruction cause slow but progressive kidney damage. This state has been termed chronic kidney disease (CKD). Population-based studies in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK show that at least 1 in 100 people have CKD, yet this often goes unnoticed. CKD is also a major risk factor for accelerated cardiovascular disease, including heart attacks and strokes. These factors provide compelling reasons to identify and appropriately manage patients with CKD.

There are currently no British evidence-based general guidelines for the management of CKD, except in certain conditions such as diabetes and hypertension in which guidelines describe effective treatments for slowing or preventing kidney damage (SIGN Numbers 49 and 51 - http://www.sign.ac.uk; / British Hypertension Society - http://www.hyp.ac.uk/bhs/home.htm). Making these treatments generally available will require new streamlined strategies for initial diagnosis and subsequent follow up.

A key challenge in planning renal services is to identify patients early enough to prevent or delay progression of their kidney disease and the associated cardiovascular damage. Preserving renal function can substantially improve quality of life and reduce the associated risk to the cardiovascular system. This has clear potential to relieve the enormous burden of disease currently left unmanaged.

Renal failure can also occur suddenly in patients without previous kidney disease, a process that is often reversible. The incidence of acute renal failure requiring treatment by dialysis in Scotland is 225 per million per year and there is at least the same number of patients with lesser degrees of acute renal failure that do not require dialysis. Acute renal failure represents an important component of the workload of renal and intensive therapy services. This has major implications for the multi-professional renal workforce and must be included in planning for renal services.

The CPG believes that there should be a sustained development of renal services in Scotland to meet the twin challenges of providing a patient-centred renal replacement service and a comprehensive service for the identification and management of CKD. The development will need to be carefully co-ordinated and subjected to a vigorous quality assurance programme, if the objectives are to be met in a cost effective manner.

Recommendation
The Scottish Executive Health Department should, within eighteen months, develop a National Plan for renal services that will provide a patient-centred service for individuals with established renal failure and for the management of people with chronic kidney disease. The plan should incorporate national standards and targets based on best evidence.

The Scottish Executive Health Department should immediately establish a National Clinical Network for Renal Disease with responsibility for developing the National Plan and with overall responsibility for ensuring it is implemented.

NHS Boards should develop Local Renal Networks based initially on the 10 adult renal units. These networks should be directly responsible for developing and prosecuting plans for the management of individuals with renal disease within their locality, in accordance with the standards and targets set out in the National Plan.

An appropriately funded quality assurance programme should be established and monitored by an organisation required to review and audit the work that is being undertaken. The CPG would suggest that the SRR is the appropriate body to do this.

All stakeholders including patients should be involved at all levels of service planning and in the production and implementation of the National Plan.

Major changes are needed in renal services, if the NHS in Scotland is to meet the challenge of delivering a comprehensive patient-centred renal service over the next 10 years. The CPG believes that patients’ views and needs should be central to this restructuring. For this reason, the CPG has undertaken an extensive consultation exercise with patients prior to making its recommendations. This included the largest survey of patients’ views about dialysis services ever conducted in Scotland, an in-depth analysis of patients’ views in a focus group and the collection of opinions from patients living in island, and other remote, communities.

The NHS QIS report “Adult Renal Services: a National Overview”, should provide the foundation for any plan for developing renal services in Scotland. It not only provided a comprehensive description of present renal services but it also set out 14 standards for the renal replacement therapy (RRT) programme, all of which the CPG strongly endorses. This report extends the NHS QIS work in two ways: for the first time it includes a detailed consideration of chronic kidney disease; and it utilises additional information not available to the NHS QIS team. This comes from a number of publications from Scotland and elsewhere in the UK that provide further information to aid the planning of renal replacement programmes and in respect of the multidisciplinary workforce required. These are discussed below.

The latest SRR Report provides comprehensive data on the epidemiology of established renal failure in Scotland (SRA 2003). A further study from the SRR highlights geographical areas that will require new dialysis facilities. Services required for acute renal failure are based on the detailed epidemiological study performed by Aberdeen University in collaboration with the SRR.
5.1.5 There are two different types of dialysis, both equally effective at replacing kidney function. Haemodialysis is typically performed for four to six hours, three times each week, either in a hospital centre or in the patient’s home. Peritoneal dialysis is performed continuously without the need for thrice weekly visits to hospital. Patients need to be thoroughly informed about their disease and the options available to treat it before they can make informed choices as to which type of dialysis is best suited to their needs and lifestyle.

5.1.6 The period before dialysis is important to the success of treatment because this is when many aspects of treatment are optimised, including modification of diet, correction of anaemia and control of blood pressure. In addition, all patients need a small but essential surgical operation before they can start dialysis, regardless of the type chosen. Regular dialysis involves considerable time commitment each week. This is especially true for hospital-based haemodialysis because the dialysis treatment sessions are prolonged by travel to and from the dialysis unit and potentially by delays before and after the dialysis session. The time spent travelling from any location in Scotland to the nearest renal unit is shown in a map on the Scottish renal registry website (www.show.scot.nhs.uk/srr). Many of the restrictions inherent in dialysis are removed by a successful renal transplant but patients still require careful monitoring to watch for rejection and other frequent complications including accelerated cardiovascular disease.

5.1.7 The CPG was concerned from the start of its work to understand whether renal services in Scotland fully addressed the needs of dialysis patients. Accordingly, it undertook an extensive survey in which the views of some 663 patients were solicited about all aspects of dialysis. The survey findings were given added depth by a focus group discussion involving a randomly selected and stratified sample of patients and carers. A full report of this work is published in a supplementary CPG document - “Renal Disease in Scotland: Consulting with Patients”.

5 CURRENT SERVICES FOR ESTABLISHED RENAL FAILURE

5.1 Defining a Patient-Centred Service

5.1.1 Patients with chronic disease face daunting challenges both from the disease itself and from the unwanted side-effects and other restrictions imposed by the therapies used to treat it continuously for many years. Accordingly, the aims of management are much broader than those for acute reversible illness and extend beyond the strictly medical aspects of therapy.

5.1.2 Patients need considerable information about their disease and different treatment options before they can make informed choices about which treatment is best suited to their needs. Treatment should be delivered efficiently in pleasant surroundings in order to prevent complications and minimise the disruption of the patients’ normal lifestyle. It should be provided by well-trained staff, familiar to the patient, thus maximising physical and psychological well-being. Lastly, many patients and their carers will need regular physical, psychological and social support.

5.1.3 The importance of these principles in medicine generally is universally agreed. The facilities to satisfy them have for many years been embedded in services in other disease areas such as cancer and - increasingly - with other chronic disorders such as heart disease. Yet the NHS QIS report showed how rarely these principles were satisfied in renal services in Scotland, despite the focused efforts of staff. This appears to be due to the overwhelming pressure on services to satisfy a constant and pressing need to create extra dialysis places, without which patients would die.

5.1.4 Patients developing renal failure need different types of service at different stages of their disease. RRT for most patients begins with a period on dialysis with the hope of a kidney transplant in the longer term - something that is medically feasible in only about 40% of cases.
5.2.4 When asked “what did you imagine dialysis would involve when you were first told you would need the treatment?”, 43% of the patients surveyed responded that they “had no idea”. Feedback from the focus group also rated information and choice as having great importance for patients, not least because the choice of dialysis modality is not usually based on strict medical criteria, but on which type of treatment will least disrupt the patient’s life. Patients emphasised the need for information to be presented in different ways, for example literature with varying levels of detail; internet or electronically-based information or access to a library resource containing publications or leaflets.

5.2.4.2 Box 4: Patients’ Comments

“I was given a folder with choices of dialysis and shown the renal unit. I was free to ask questions of staff and patients” (Patient from Ninewells Hospital, Dundee)

“Staff at the hospital were reassuring and showed me round the dialysis unit with information” (Patient from Glasgow Royal Infirmary)

5.2.4.3 However, paper-based information should not be regarded as a good substitute for personal contact with appropriate staff - “a member of staff” was the most popular choice in answer to the question “how would you like to access this information”. Nearly a third (28%) of the patients surveyed felt that they had been inadequately prepared for dialysis. Of those that felt they were well prepared, many had been taken for a tour of the unit and had been given the opportunity to speak to patients already on dialysis.

5.2.4.4 Nearly half (44%) of the patients surveyed felt that support services that should have been available to them were lacking at the pre-dialysis stage. Many said, for example, that they needed, but did not have access to, social workers (particularly for advice on benefits entitlements) and psychologists/counsellors. This also came out strongly in the focus groups. Other suggestions for improvement included:

- More education evenings including one-to-one meetings with other patients and former patients
- Greater recognition of the massive impact on life of the patient and their family
- Better preparation for the psychological and emotional effects of dialysis.

5.2.4.5 As much information as possible should be made available ahead of a consultation so that the patient has the chance to absorb some of the key information and is better able to ask detailed questions of medical staff. Many patients will require all treatment options over time and this should be emphasised from the outset. The option of live donor transplantation should also be raised early enough to enable pre-emptive surgery before dialysis has to start.

5.2.4.6 Some patients want more extensive access to their laboratory results and other areas of their clinical notes. The CPG therefore believes that Scotland should collaborate in a UK-wide project to allow patients to obtain remote secure access to agreed extracts from their electronic records across the internet. In order for this to be achieved efficiently and effectively, there should be a rapid move towards integrated electronic patient record-keeping. This will also help to reduce the clerical workload and may have other advantages, such as allowing for the dissemination of patient information and other material.

5.2.4.7 The patient’s partner and family should not be forgotten. Even if they are not involved directly in treatment, the patient will certainly need their informed and continuing support. The provision of support for carers varies from unit to unit with some patients citing access to carer support as “easy” or only a “telephone call away. However, 44% of patients surveyed felt that support offered to carers was insufficient.

Recommendation

Sufficient support and education should be provided for all patients approaching established renal failure to enable them to make fully informed choices about treatment modality. This will often require access to all members of the multi-disciplinary workforce, different types of literature to suit different needs, access to the internet and the like.

Recommendation

All patients should be able to choose freely between the dialysis modalities that are medically suitable including home dialysis, hospital dialysis, continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis and automated peritoneal dialysis. This range of choice should be available routinely within two years.

Recommendation

All units should have IT systems that can report data directly to the SRR for audit and quality improvement. Ultimately, this should be part of the integrated electronic records system, linked to primary care and patients should have electronic access to their records as part of this system, within three years.

5.3 Life with Established Renal Failure

5.3.1 Travel Time

5.3.1.1 Once having progressed to dialysis, there are various areas where patients perceive that services are open to improvement. These include transportation issues, dialysis session flexibility - often a function of service capacity, staffing arrangements and the built environment of their unit.

5.3.1.2 For many patients on haemodialysis, the “dialysis day” may be much longer than the time taken to dialyse due to the travel time to and from the dialysis centre and delays before starting treatment. Patients feel strongly that the length of the dialysis day should be minimised by providing dialysis as close as possible to home, a view endorsed by NHS QIS Standard 13 that states that travel time should be no more than 30 minutes.

5.3.1.3 Although SRR data suggests that only 30 percent of patients live further than this, the CPG patient survey suggested that 49% of patients live over 30 minutes travelling time away from their dialysis unit, with 15% of those patients living over an hour’s travelling time away. One patient living six miles from his unit regularly finds himself away from home for seven hours to complete a four hour dialysis session, due to delays in transport, almost doubling his “dialysis day”.

5.3.1.4 The situation is particularly bad for those who live in some of the remotest parts of the country - such as the island communities - or where there is low population density, or poor transport infrastructure.

5.3.1.5 On the Isle of Bute, for example, patients receiving hospital haemodialysis ordinarily face at least a nine hour dialysis day - of which nearly five hours is travel time - three times a week. Patients believe that the grind of travel is much worse than that of the treatment and that although the location of treatment may not be far away, travel times are often unacceptable.
The Highland region covers a geographical area the size of Belgium and, together with the Western Isles, has some 160 renal patients. A number of mainland haemodialysis patients face travel times of up to four hours followed by four to five hours treatment and then three to four hours to return home, at least three times a week. Adverse weather conditions will extend these times further.

There is currently no provision of renal services in the Western Isles. Hospital haemodialysis patients from Lewis fly to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness for treatment, and potentially have to remain in Inverness during the week, only to return home at the weekend. Others have had to travel to Glasgow for treatment. There are also a number of home dialysis patients in the Western Isles whose access to professional support and advice exists only on the mainland.

Similarly there are no renal replacement services available in Orkney. Those requiring hospital haemodialysis must face a long journey to Aberdeen. Those treated by peritoneal dialysis rely heavily on the support of family and friends to allow them to do so, and must travel to Aberdeen regularly to attend clinics.

With a growing patient population noted in all the communities outlined above, demand for renal replacement services is increasing, as is the number of patients failing to receive optimum care as described by the 14 NHS QIS Standards for Adult Renal Services.

Patients whose travel to haemodialysis is much longer than 30 minutes may further compromise their health over time. More satellite dialysis units and better patient transport arrangements would help to alleviate many of the problems.

Transport to and from the dialysis unit is only one of the reasons why the dialysis day is prolonging. Many patients experience delays in starting dialysis after arriving in the unit because the previous shift has overrun. This is a direct result of the inflexibility that occurs when dialysis centres operate above optimal capacity and causes untold worry. The CPG feels that it should not present too much of a logistical challenge to work out ways of tackling this problem.

**Recommendation**

The length of the dialysis day should be minimised by efficient transport to and from the centre and by eliminating delays in commencing dialysis and waiting for transport after dialysis treatment has finished. Providers should develop plans to deliver the NHS QIS standards for transport and for patient waiting times pre and post-dialysis. These plans should be developed immediately and implemented within two years.

**Capacity**

Building life around dialysis necessitates some flexibility of dialysis schedules, particularly for the patient who is trying to continue working or who has family commitments. Just over one fifth of patients surveyed would have preferred a different dialysis shift but were unable to change because of lack of space at the unit. Furthermore, when questioned on what the main drawbacks of dialysis were for them, the most commonly cited responses were:

- amount of time dedicated to receiving treatment including travel
- effects on their working life
- restrictions on physical activity/tiredness
- lack of freedom and independence.

The CPG believes that such drawbacks should be considered when reviewing and planning dialysis services so that, where possible, efforts can be made to minimise their impact, allowing patients to maintain as reasonable a quality of life as possible.

Another critical issue relates to the minor but essential surgical procedure (access surgery) required to prepare patients for dialysis. These are often subject to considerable delay and cancellations. Although this was not specifically addressed in the survey, it is known from discussion with patients that they generally feel that these procedures should command a higher priority in theatre timetabling. In particular, it is felt that access surgery should be delayed only in exceptional circumstances since the repeated delays, that are the reality of current practice, add considerably to the pressure on a patient who may already be apprehensive about life on dialysis.

These objectives can only be met in dialysis units that are adequately staffed and that run at optimal operating capacity, with an appropriate level of inbuilt flexibility.

**Recommendation**

Patients should expect to start and finish dialysis at specified times and, within two years, there should be flexibility about the choice of dialysis shifts a patient is offered.

**Staffing**

**Staffing was the topic deemed most important by the CPG focus group and over one third of patients thought staffing levels were inadequate. Access to staff with particular types of knowledge was often missing. This included counsellors - including those for carers - and advice about social security benefits.**

**Recommendation**

All renal units should provide an efficient service for access surgery capable of delivering surgery reliably on a pre-arranged day.

Patients beginning home-based treatments need home visits by dialysis nursing staff to allay anxieties and establish secure regimes. All patients and their families may benefit from visits from other members of the multidisciplinary team. A dietician can explain to whoever does the cooking how to include the patient’s essential dietary needs in food preparation for the whole family. An occupational therapist can assess the need for aids and equipment at home. A trained renal social worker can explore potential benefit payments to which the patient is entitled. These are often needed to help to cushion loss of income suffered by the patient or their carer.

Patients need a 24-hour contact number for the renal unit, to ensure prompt, appropriate care for problems associated with renal failure. The NHS QIS document and Renal Association standards demand the presence of an appropriately trained multi-disciplinary team. In Scotland, for example, social workers and renal counsellors are very often missing from this team. Such teams are important in ensuring both a better holistic standard of care for patients and to improve the management of co-morbidity, which has also been identified as an issue by the CPG.

**Recommendation**

Patients on RRT should have ready access to the support provided by the multi-disciplinary team, including trained renal social workers. They should also expect to be treated by the same small team of nurses. This should be routinely provided within three years.
There should be sufficient capacity in hospital haemodialysis programmes to provide visiting patients with dialysis. This provision should be available to patients who need to dialyse away from their base unit, for reasons of work or pleasure, and should be provided within two years.

5.3.6 Life After Transplantation

5.3.6.1 In almost all respects the life of the patient after renal transplantation is easier than that on dialysis but even the most successful transplant brings its own medical challenges.

5.3.6.2 Primary care physicians have relatively little experience of the drugs used to prevent rejection and of the long-term issues regarding kidney graft function. Transplant patients feel the need for more ready access to advice in these areas than most primary care physicians are able to deliver. Many transplant patients feel the need for more direct access to the transplant unit both as a way of obtaining their latest laboratory results and as a source of advice about their medication and other clinical issues.

5.3.7 Individual Views - Conclusion

5.3.7.1 The CPG was convinced that the views expressed by the patients raised justified concerns. NHS services for all chronic diseases should aspire to deliver the same standards of care regardless of diagnosis. In ... services. The CPG strongly believed that "disease code prescribing" is just as iniquitous as "postcode prescribing".

6 DELIVERING A PATIENT-CENTRED DIALYSIS SERVICE

6.1 Although the incidence of kidney failure has remained static for the past few years in Scotland, its prevalence is rising in the population as new patients are added to renal replacement programmes. However, both are expected to rise dramatically in coming years, driven by the increase in diabetes. This will present a challenge to policy-makers, as they assess the additional services required.

6.2 It is of crucial importance that a formal assessment does take place since many of the problems currently faced in Scottish renal care relate to a failure to plan for capacity increases in response to rising demand. There is a need for more proactive planning of services rather than the current pattern of merely reacting to increases in demand.

6.3 The incidence of kidney failure rises steeply with age. Above the age of 65, it is nine times higher than for people aged 20 to 44 years (SRR 2001 report). The Registrar General for Scotland predicts that the number of older people will rise over the next twenty-five years (RGO 2002) and a recent report from the European Renal Registry which included data from Scotland, showed that the numbers of patients above the age of 65 who start RRT rose five fold between 1985 and 1999. Taken together, these reports make it clear that we should plan facilities to treat larger numbers of older and possibly disabled people in the future.

6.4 Complex models using formulae derived from past patterns of treatment have been used to predict future requirements for RRT in many parts of the world. Data from the SRR enables us to use actual figures for new patients and deaths from a complete national registry of patients on RRT in Scotland. A simple model can be constructed of what would have happened if these rates had been in place from the beginning.
The distribution between modes of therapy is predicted by examining the trends over the last 15 years and the likely future trends - assuming no significant changes in treatment. An effective plateau level of around 900 per million population (some 4,500 patients) on RRT is predicted in the next 10 years. Approximately 400 people pmp will have functioning renal transplants with perhaps 80 pmp on home haemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis. The largest group will be around 420 pmp on hospital haemodialysis, a near doubling of current levels. At the end of 2003 there were 694 pmp on RRT. The number of patients on peritoneal dialysis has not risen in the last 10 years and the number of patients with a functioning transplant may be reaching a plateau.

Increases in numbers will therefore be largely confined to those on haemodialysis. Planning for the considerable increase in hospital dialysis facilities required should be driven and audited by national bodies and NHS boards, in conjunction with local renal networks. These latter bodies should be required to develop five year rolling plans to provide facilities for RRT for all patients needing them.

Recommendation

There should be a sustained increase in hospital dialysis stations sufficient to provide haemodialysis for all who would benefit from it, regardless of location. This process should begin immediately and reach optimal capacity within three years. Dialysis units should always run at optimal operating levels, to provide sufficient flexibility to prevent inefficiencies for patients and staff. We estimate optimal operating level to be 80% of available dialysis stations for both main and satellite units.

Recommendation

There should be a regular national review of dialysis facilities by the National Clinical Network for Renal Disease and a capital programme to ensure that patients are dialysed in pleasant non-institutional surroundings with access, for example, to telephones and the internet.

There is growing literature on the negative impact of "late referral" of patients with advanced renal impairment. Observational studies have uniformly shown increased morbidity, hospital stay and cost of treatment in patients starting long-term dialysis who were referred late (usually defined as within four months of needing dialysis), compared to those referred to a dialysis unit earlier. Recent studies have reported that late referral to a nephrologist is an independent risk factor for early death on dialysis. There is consensus that, for optimal management, preparation for dialysis should start a year before a patient needs it. This time is used to:

- Assess the patient medically and treat complications including anaemia, hypertension and poor nutrition
- Provide information and discussion for patients to make an informed and unpressured choice about the type of dialysis that would best suit their lifestyle as well as the options for renal transplantation
- Create permanent vascular access for haemodialysis or place in-dwelling peritoneal dialysis catheters, so that dialysis can be introduced smoothly.

To achieve this, all patients need access to members of a full multidisciplinary team prior to an individual care plan being drawn up with them. Progress needs to be monitored regularly and plans reviewed.

These procedures are best performed in a clinic where the necessary staff and coordination are available. A "low-clearance" or pre-dialysis clinic, is an ideal setting for developing new work practices. Many aspects of the work could be performed by nurse specialists, and new ways of communicating with patients could be developed - either electronically or using staff with appropriate basic training and qualifications. The possibility of interleaving conventional outpatient visits with telemedicine consultations should be investigated. The latter could be organised from a patient’s home or a health centre where other members of the community health care team, such as the GP, could be involved.

Recommendation

All provider Trusts should, within two years, establish outpatient clinics for patients approaching renal failure that provide integrated "one stop" access to all members of the renal multidisciplinary workforce.

Recommendation

Patients should be given full educational, social and psychological support to ensure they are sufficiently informed about their condition to take an active part in management, including choice of type of dialysis and suitability for transplantation. This recommendation should be implemented immediately.

Recommendation

All patients should be provided with a care plan containing objectives of treatment - that is to slow progression and optimise treatment and with a choice of type of dialysis and suitability for transplantation. The effectiveness of the care plan should be audited by the SRR, as is currently the case for those on RRT.

Recommendation

Local Renal Networks working with Unified Boards should within three years ensure that arrangements are in place for all patients to have vascular access created in a timely way and without repeated cancellations.

Unless there are specific medical contraindications, all patients should be dialysed three times weekly to the Renal Association's evidence based standards for adequacy. Their anaemia should also be corrected to the Renal Association standard with appropriate doses of epoetin and iron. They should have full access to nutritional support as recommended by the NHS QIS. The full multidisciplinary team, including a dedicated renal social worker, should be available to support them.

Recommendation

All provider organisations should immediately undertake a staff audit to determine whether they meet the NHS QIS standards for the provision of the multidisciplinary workforce, staffed to the levels recommended in the BRS Guidelines. A plan should be developed to ensure these levels are met within two years.

Recommendation

All dialysis units should, within two years, have sufficient specialist renal social workers to meet the BRS guidelines. Trusts and local authorities should co-operate to ensure that this happens.
7 TRANSPLANTATION AND ORGAN DONATION

7.1 The only truly effective long-term solution for renal disease is a kidney transplant and the main challenge facing transplantation in Scotland is the shortage of donor organs.

7.2 Provisional figures from UK Transplant for 2002 report the cadaveric solid organ donation rate in the United Kingdom as 13 pmp, with an 11.4 pmp donation rate in Scotland. This difference may be attributed to the expansion of non-heart-beating donor programmes in England, something that is not currently undertaken in Scotland. We note that recent clarification of the legal aspects by the Crown Office in Scotland has allowed this area to be pursued. Even with non-heart-beating donation, the donor rate is considerably lower than is needed to keep step with demand for organs and is lower than in other European countries, notably Spain.

7.3 A significant improvement in the above donation rates will be required if the gap between demand and supply of organs is to be bridged. The waiting list in Scotland for a kidney transplant in January 2002 was 556. The CPG, backed by the strong endorsement of the patient focus group, supports the recommendations of the Scottish Transplant Group to increase the numbers of organs available for transplant. Its recommendations include:

- A comprehensive and sustained national organ donation publicity campaign (this was due to commence in February 2004)
- Expansion of live kidney donation. Scotland currently has only 7.8 pmp live donor transplant compared with 19.1 pmp in the United States and 17.1 pmp in Norway. This may involve legislative changes to allow ‘cross-over’ or ‘paired’ donation and altruistic live donation
- Implementation of non-heart beating donation programmes under the auspices of the UKT initiative
- Further consideration and debate on legislation around organ donation
- Provision of adequate staff across the multi-disciplinary team.

7.4 Transplantation

7.4.1 Recruitment difficulties relating to transplant surgeons throughout the UK are mirrored in Scotland. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency, since centres require skilled transplant personnel to maintain the highest standard of care.

7.4.2 On a wider national basis the Scottish Transplant Group has recommended that there should be a single organ retrieval team for the whole of Scotland. This would be expected to reduce disruption at the donor hospitals and allow flexibility with operating times. Negotiations concerning the single organ retrieval team are approaching conclusion.

7.4.3 All transplant patients receive intensive follow-up, usually by the nephrologist in either the transplant centre or referring unit. This input is necessary to ensure long-term graft survival, thus avoiding the necessity for dialysis. In addition, due to the effects of immunosuppression and other medication, health promotion and early identification of complications is vital. With growing numbers of transplant patients, additional resources are required to facilitate this follow-up. At present one centre has a transplant co-ordinator (registered nurse) who performs annual health checks on all transplant patients.

7.5 Presumed Consent

7.5.1 The CPG debated the appropriateness of recommending in this report a move to a system of presumed consent in Scotland. Following that discussion, the CPG has decided that it cannot take a stance in either direction on this issue at this stage. Instead the Group wishes to focus on promoting the broad recommendations of the Scottish Transplant Group as set out above.

7.5.2 The CPG would also like other ways of actively encouraging people to sign up to the organ donation register to be explored. These include a system of mandated choice or schemes that require individuals, for example, to tick a box on their tax return or driving license forms. It is further suggested that asking patients whether they are on the register should be added to the list of standard questions that GPs ask when signing up a patient or undertaking one of their periodic health checks.

Recommendation

A non-heart beating cadaver organ donation programme should be initiated immediately.

Recommendation

Sufficient specialised nephrologists, surgeons and renal recipient transplant co-ordinators should be available in Scotland within three years to ensure all transplant patients receive adequate follow-up. This will require increases in all workforce areas.

8 DELIVERING A MULTI-PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE

8.1 The management of patients with established renal failure requires a highly committed multi-professional workforce. Renal units in Scotland have far fewer staff across all the professions than is the case in other European countries. The British Renal Society (BRS), the society that represents all branches of the collective workforce, has recently published an authoritative report that produces benchmarks for the number of whole time equivalents (WTEs) required to treat 100 patients on RRT (see box 5). When related to a Scottish context the four key deficiencies are in; the medical workforce in District General Hospital (DGH) nephrology units; trained renal nurses employed in dialysis units; renal dieticians; and trained renal social workers.

8.2 Medical Staff

8.2.1 Medical staffing levels in renal units vary considerably across Scotland. In particular, the staffing of renal units located in DGHs requires urgent attention. The number of consultant nephrology WTEs is considerably below those recommended in the BRS report (see table 2), resulting in difficulty in providing satisfactory out-of-hours cover. These pressures are compounded by the paucity of junior doctors in training attached to DGH renal units. They will be further exacerbated by changes to junior doctors’ hours and the introduction of the new consultant contract.
Nursing Staff

8.3.1 Surveys undertaken by the Scottish Renal Nurses Group have demonstrated a substantial shortage of dialysis nurses. This finding was highlighted by the NHS QIS report which provided clear evidence that all 10 Scottish adult renal units were currently operating sub-optimally in this regard. A major challenge here is that there is a recognised national shortage of appropriately trained renal nurses. This is true across all areas of practice including nephrology; transplantation; haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis.

8.3.2 The CPG recognises that more research is needed before this challenge can be met. A subgroup of the SRR is ideally placed to undertake such research in conjunction with the National Workforce Unit. The aim should be to offer patients on dialysis the same standard of care throughout Scotland regardless of geographical, economical and circumstantial situations.

8.3.3 This is at least partly a function of the problem of recruiting and retaining nurses where there are significant problems that need to be addressed. Renal nursing is a challenging area in which to work due to the heavy workload and related stress and this is especially true for newly qualified nurses. Recruitment and retention could be improved by a combination of solutions, including enhanced payment in recognition of the degree of specialisation and training requirements of the area; improving career prospects; removing blocks to promotion; and providing greater exposure to renal nursing in basic nurse training.

8.3.4 Renal nurses contribute at all stages of the patient journey in delivering safe and effective care. The value of this input could be greatly enhanced, if a clear template existed that provided a proper framework for renal nurses within the service should also be explored, developed and utilised more effectively than is currently the case.

Recommendation

A framework for renal nursing should immediately be developed for Scotland. Clinical competencies and training should be standardised.

Recommendation

A comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy should immediately be developed to ensure renal nursing is featured at pre-registration stage and is recognised within general nursing.

8.3.5

Clinical competencies for trained nursing staff should be standardised, especially as the roles of a nurse working within the field of renal specialty are constantly diversifying and currently include: clinical nurse facilitator, anaemia nurse; pre-dialysis nurse; vascular access nurse; nurse consultant; palliative care nurse; and home dialysis training nurse.

8.3.6 Nurses have a diverse role within the renal service and the requirement for a renal nurse to be appropriately skilled to enable them to provide a complex and diverse service is obviously paramount. Training standards for renal nurses should also be made more uniform across Scotland.

8.3.7 This should be facilitated by the appointment of a renal SVQ co-ordinator for each provider; by defining a new role for non-qualified staff, such as the renal care assistants and clinical assistants; and by providing funding to allow the release of nurses to undertake the necessary studies whilst ensuring that adequate cover is in place for them when they do so. The essential and valued work undertaken by non-registered nurses within the service should also be explored, developed and utilised more effectively than is currently the case.

Recommendation

A framework for renal nursing should immediately be developed for Scotland. Clinical competencies and training should be standardised.

Recommendation

A comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy should immediately be developed to ensure renal nursing is featured at pre-registration stage and is recognised within general nursing.
10 CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

10.1 Mild to moderate chronic kidney disease (CKD) is very common in the general population. Recent surveys from England and Northern Ireland suggest that between 0.5 and 1% of the population have significant proteinuria, persistent proteinuria, unexplained haematuria or serum creatinine of more than 150 mmol/L or estimated GFR < 60 ml/min. Clearly it is neither possible nor appropriate for all patients with CKD in Scotland to be seen and managed by a consultant nephrologist. The great majority of these patients have mild renal disease and are not destined to reach end-stage renal failure. If they are free from complications they may be appropriately managed in primary care.

10.2 Regular measurement of kidney function is logical in patients at risk of progressive renal disease because of the adverse effects of late presentation. Renal function should also be measured regularly in all patients with hypertension (British Hypertension Society), diabetes (SIGN) or proteinuria, or significant bladder outflow obstruction.

10.3 In addition to being a predictor of progressive renal failure, CKD is an important risk marker for cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease. Proteinuria, including microalbuminuria in non-diabetics, is a powerful cardiovascular risk marker even if glomerular filtration rate is normal. There is compelling evidence that established treatable cardiovascular risk factors, such as smoking, hypertension and dyslipidaemia are also risk markers for progression of many forms of renal disease. Management of patients with CKD therefore essentially involves minimising cardiovascular risk.

10.4 Evidence-based guidelines for management of CKD have been developed in other countries, notably the USA, Australia and Canada. Many of the recommendations in these guidelines are directly applicable to Scotland. The particular emphasis on the importance of early diagnosis and intervention and the need for multidisciplinary care are also relevant. This section of the Second Report is intended to summarise the main recommendations and to set out the plan for the development of relevant guidelines for Scotland.

10.5 We have not addressed the question of which individuals should be responsible for the “care plan” for CKD. This will require extra demands on time and resources both in primary care and in renal units. From the patient’s perspective, what can safely and reliably be handled in primary care or what is better carried out in a hospital sector should be achieved in the appropriate setting.

10.6 It is likely that various models will emerge, including conventional “shared care” between GPs and hospital-based nephrologists; geriatricians, diabetologists, and other secondary care physicians; specialist primary care physicians or nurses working in the primary care setting; and/or computer-based shared care. Optimal arrangements will vary depending on the geographical setting, services already established and other local factors. Decisions about service design and implementation should be made locally within the constraints of an overall National Plan.

9 ACUTE RENAL FAILURE

9.1 Acute renal failure (ARF) is a devastating illness in which there is rapid, but often potentially reversible, reduction in renal function. It can be caused by a number of underlying diseases and may or may not require dialysis for a period of a few days to a few weeks.

9.2 Some patients recover renal function and return almost to their previous state of health or their health may deteriorate. In this case they often develop multi-organ failure and may die. A small number of these patients develop chronic renal failure. Patients with acute renal failure are cared for in hospital. Patients who require RRT (dialysis or haemofiltration) are normally transferred to a large hospital where they are cared for in either a renal or an intensive care unit. Huge resources are required for the short duration of this illness.

9.3 Until recently, there had been very few large studies of the epidemiology of acute renal failure. In 2001, the SRR undertook a pilot study of patients who were treated with RRT which is being followed up by a comprehensive study funded by the Office of the Chief Scientist for Scotland. The initial findings for these two studies give a very clear picture of what is currently happening in Scotland. The incidence of acute renal failure needing treatment by RRT is about 225 per million per year, much higher than had previously been realised. Half the patients are cared for in an ICU and the death rate at 90 days is likely to be as high as 70%. Acute renal failure is to some extent a marker and a consequence of severe illness and not always the primary cause of the patient’s death. These new data have been carefully collected in a comprehensive prospective survey.

9.4 In contrast to the situation with end stage renal disease, there is little difficulty in making a timely diagnosis for patients who develop acute renal failure in hospital or as a result of catastrophic illness. However, a minority of patients develop acute renal failure silently as a result of hypersensitivity to prescribed drugs or as a result of glomerulonephritis. Early diagnosis of these patients presents a challenge, especially in the primary care setting. The challenge is to identify those patients who may benefit from highly specialised treatment and to provide appropriate facilities and staff training for the large numbers of very ill patients involved. We can now at least predict the numbers of patients we are likely to encounter with ARF in Scotland each year, their location and the extent of the peaks and troughs in the rate of referral.

Recommendation
Local renal networks should document the workload required to treat patients with acute renal failure and integrate the results into the required dialysis services.
Recommendation
All patients with CKD and an estimated creatinine clearance of less than 30 ml/min or with worsening kidney function should be referred to a nephrologist to avoid the risk of late referral.

Recommendation
Information technology systems should allow automatic transfer of the results of blood tests on all patients known to the Renal Unit from the laboratory where that patient’s blood tests are processed, together with a system for bringing these results to the attention of those responsible for monitoring the patient’s progress.

11 RESEARCH

11.1 The Scottish renal community is fortunate to have an exceptionally strong research base with internationally recognised research groups working across a broad range of disciplines. These include the fundamental aspects of developmental and inherited disorders of the kidney; the genetics of susceptibility to CKD and its progression to renal failure; the pathogenic role of autoimmunity and inflammation in renal disease; and the application of applied health sciences (including epidemiology and health services research) to the renal disease and its management. Strong collaborative links have been established between research groups investigating similar problems but remain much weaker among groups investigating different areas.

11.2 The CPG recognises the value of renal research in Scotland and the magnitude of the potential benefits it can bring to the care of patients in the future. In the short term, expertise in applied health sciences will be of great benefit in developing new management guidelines for chronic kidney disease and in the design and evaluation of new ways to deliver best practice to those in need.

11.3 The CPG believes that Scottish expertise provides enormous opportunities to apply the insights provided by basic research into renal disease into clinical practice through the development of a program of "translational research". The expertise in research into the biology of renal disease, combined with the skill and organisational ability of Scottish nephrologists, should ensure the success of such a program. It should make a substantial impact in the longer term.

Recommendation
The National Clinical Network for Renal Disease should develop a research strategy as an integral part of the National Plan. The research strategy should take account of expertise in all aspects of renal research in Scotland and should set the development of "translational research" as a high priority.
APPENDIX ONE: OFFICERS AND ADVISORY GROUP

The Officers of the Cross Party Group on Kidney Disease are:

Margaret Jamieson, MSP - Convenor
Professor Andrew Rees - Vice Convenor
Katie Ronald - Secretary

The advisory group to the Cross Party Group on Kidney Disease during the preparation of this report comprised:

Ippy Brown, Clinical Nurse Manager, Renal Services North Division, Greater Glasgow Health Board
Mr John Forsythe - Consultant Transplant Surgeon, Edinburgh; Chairman of the Scottish Transplant Group and Specialist Adviser to the CMO Scotland
Berkeley Greenwood - (Administrative Secretary); adviser to the National Kidney Research Fund and employed by Portcullis Public Affairs
Dr Andrew Innes - Consultant Physician and Nephrologist; Ayrshire & Arran, representing the Scottish Renal Association
Dr Chris Isles - Consultant Physician and Nephrologist; Dumfries and Galloway
Dr Brian Junor - Consultant Nephrologist, Glasgow
Professor Andrew Rees - (Chair); Regius Professor of Medicine, University of Aberdeen and President of the Renal Association of Great Britain and Ireland
Katie Ronald - Public Affairs Manager (Scotland), The National Kidney Research Fund
Dr Keith Simpson - Consultant Nephrologist, Glasgow and Chair of the Scottish Renal Registry
Gil Small - Dialysis patient and Chair of the Scottish Federation of Kidney Patients Associations
Nick Turkentine - Head of Marketing and Communications, The National Kidney Research Fund

We are also grateful for the input of Dr Ian Mackay and Anne Marie Craig who have acted as replacements for colleagues during the production of the report and to Mrs Florence Small.

12 PAEDIATRIC NEPHROLOGY

12.1 The journey of care for children with renal disease increasingly begins ante-natally with the diagnosis of renal disease in utero. There is a requirement for an integrated multidisciplinary approach to the perinatal care of these infants. Throughout childhood a deterioration in renal function is typically seen in those born with renal disease with passage through chronic renal failure to end stage renal failure and finally transplantation. This requires access to multidisciplinary specialist paediatric nephrology services, including medical and nursing staff, dieticians, social workers, psychologists, pharmacists, teachers and play therapists. The care of these children is predominantly undertaken at their local regional centre with input from one of the four paediatric nephrologists who undertake regional outreach clinics.

12.2 Clinical governance dictates that as a result of the relatively low incidence of renal disease in children compared to adults, optimal care of children with complex renal disease should be managed from a single centre supervising the management of children with acute renal failure and providing diagnostic renal biopsy and other specialised investigations, dialysis access, initiation of home dialysis, hospital based dialysis and transplantation capable of meeting published clinical standards.

12.3 Unlike adult services the challenge for those caring for children with renal disease is not the increase in numbers but the ability to deliver equity of care throughout Scotland. The provision of outreach services is hampered both by limitations in medical staffing compared to published guidelines, which precludes an expansion in outreach clinics with several regional areas unserved including Fife, the Highlands, the Borders and Lanarkshire. Where existing outreach clinics are undertaken these are underpinned by local paediatricians with an interest in nephrology serving as a local contact with the central service. Historically, senior general paediatricians in geographically remote areas have managed more complex renal patients onsite, but as these individuals retire, and with the implications of clinical governance, this will disappear, requiring an expansion in the outreach clinics already undertaken.

12.4 The development of a managed clinical network for paediatric nephrology is essential to serve the requirements of the paediatric renal population in Scotland, functioning to provide equity of access and delivery of renal services wherever possible at local level. At present, this need is unmet and in addition there remains a dependence on charitably funded posts supporting nursing, dietetic and social work provision both locally and centrally. Without an increase in consultant paediatric nephrologist numbers, there can be no expansion in outreach services, thus requiring increased travelling and isolation for patients with renal disease and their families.

Recommendation

The National Clinical Network for Renal Disease should include the care of paediatric patients within its remit.

Recommendation

An additional National Clinical Network for Paediatric Renal Disease should be established immediately to develop plans for the delivery of a co-ordinated and patient-centred Renal Service for children in Scotland. Its work should be integrated with the National Clinical Network for Renal Disease.