**B4.5: Understanding Health Challenges of Older Adults Undergoing Hemodialysis as Evidence for Self-Management Strategies to Promote Health**

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**Abstract:**
**Introduction:** As the United States population ages, there will be a substantial increase in the number of older adults undergoing hemodialysis. A lack of evidence regarding the health
challenges of making lifestyle change and strategies employed by population warrants further research. The purpose of the study was to identify the health challenges of making lifestyle change in older adults undergoing hemodialysis and to identify approaches for resolving these health challenges.

Method(s): This qualitative study used Story Theory to guide both story-gathering and analysis (Liehr & Smith, 2007; 2008). Older adults (≥ 60), who were undergoing hemodialysis were asked to share their story about the health challenge of making lifestyle change; first in the present moment; then they were encouraged to talk about things in the past that related to where they are now; lastly, they were prompted to talk about their hopes and dreams for the future. The story gatherer strives to understand what “matters most” to the person.

Results: There were 56 participants with an average age of 72 (sd = 7.8) years in the final data set. The majority was Anglo-American (64 %) males (57 %). Data were analyzed using the story inquiry method. Three themes captured the essence of what “matters most” to participants in the stories of health challenges: 1) living a restriction-driven existence; 2) balancing independence/dependence; and 3) struggling with those providing care. Eleven distinct approaches emerged from the stories of health challenges ranging from acknowledgment of existing not living to more proactive approaches of taking a stand, choosing a positive outlook, and seeking perspective through connections. The approaches to resolving the health challenges exists on a continuum, by “unhappy passive acceptance” on one end and “assertive behavior to get what you want” on the other.

Discussion & Conclusions: The findings suggest Story Theory may provide the necessary foundation for identifying health challenges older adults face as they undergo hemodialysis, allowing for shared dialogue of possible interventions to resolve health challenge. A non-judgmental approach may support self-management behaviors that result in positive health outcomes.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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