

Challenges and Opportunities for Effective Chronic Kidney Disease Care Delivery: A Synthesis of Health Systems and Policies from 19 Countries

Aminu K. Bello¹, MD, PhD, FASN, Adeera Levin², MD, Braden J. Manns³, MD, Tilman B. Drueke⁴, MD, Brenda Hemmelgarn³, MD, PhD, Scott Klarenbach¹, MD, Giuseppe Remuzzi⁵, MD, Marcello Tonelli⁵, MD

¹University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada, ²University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada, ³University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada, ⁴Inserm Unit 1088, UFR Médecine/Pharmacie, Université de Picardie, Amiens, France, ⁵Mario Negri Institute, Bergamo, Italy

BACKGROUND: Little is known about the best way to structure health systems to facilitate early chronic kidney disease (CKD) care. We evaluated CKD care programs within the context of the healthcare systems across countries to identify best practices and initiatives in care delivery.

METHODS: We collated and synthesized data on existing CKD care policies and structures across 19 developed countries. These included CKD care frameworks within the context of the healthcare system providing a synthesis and comparative analysis of the information across the individual countries. Data were obtained from multiple sources, including renal registries, government reports and published literature, and a detailed survey of key stakeholders from each country (N=1226).

RESULTS: Only three countries have a national specific CKD policy, and governments generally do not consider CKD a priority. For instance, in only three countries did the majority of respondents (>75%) believe that CKD was recognized as a priority by the government. Eleven countries have national CKD guidelines, and none has established schemes to monitor adherence. There were multi-faceted barriers to early CKD care: limited workforce capacity, absence of surveillance systems, lack of a coordinated care strategy, non-integration of CKD with other non-communicable disease (NCD) control initiatives, and low awareness of CKD among stakeholders (policymakers, primary care practitioners, and patients).

CONCLUSIONS: There are common challenges faced by diverse health systems on CKD care. Some countries are further ahead than others, but all have considerable work to do. This reflects the need for international cooperation to strengthen health systems and policies for CKD care. This data identifies opportunities for optimal care delivery, and explores potential mechanisms to capitalize on these opportunities.