

# Reference nurse: myth or reality?

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## Introduction

Providing nursing care means looking at a person in all dimensions (bio-psycho-social and economic) and identifying intervention needs in order to improve, not only his physical and haemodynamic status, but also his well-being and quality of life. Using the approach of a Reference Nurse (*RefN*) is a method of nursing care in which a nurse takes the responsibility for coordinating a group of patients inside a dialysis unit and becomes their interface between healthcare team, family/caregivers, and primary health care system.

## Objectives

To evaluate the nurses perspective and feelings about *RefN* as an approach to provide nursing care to patients undergoing haemodialysis.

## Methods

This is a qualitative, cross-sectional study. We used an open-answer questionnaire and the sample comprised five full-time employee renal nurses.

## Results

- 80% of nurses reported that the *RefN method* promoted personalised and humanised care;
- 100% of them felt recognition for the care provided and reported that since they are *RefN*, they have a better understanding of the patients, their families and social condition;
- All the nurses felt themselves as a link with the patient and family/caregivers, physicians, social worker and nutritionist;
- The main difficulties mentioned (reported by 40% of nurses) were the short time to communicate with nephrologists and resident physicians, and to investigate other areas of knowledge;
- 60% of nurses reported that the time available per month was sufficient to keep up to date the nursing care plan of their patients.

## Conclusion

As already demonstrated in previous studies, *RefN care method* allows the nurses to take care of patients using an holistic approach and achieve high standards of quality in nursing care. This methodology of care also allows nurses to practice nursing care as a whole, contributed to a personal sense of professional fulfilment using scientific methodology in the provision of care and the recognition by patients, family/caregivers, and other members of the health team.

## References

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Picture 1: NephroCare Braga's Reference Nursing Team