

Safety of haemodialysis patients - The risk of falling

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Introduction

Patients' safety comprises all measures and procedures for the identification, analysis and management of risks or incidents that a health organisation adopts to provide safer services and minimise the risks of harming patients. Patient safety is a global public health problem. Major patient safety issues in the dialysis centres include:

- (1) falls,
- (2) medication errors (including deviation from the basic of the dialysis prescription, allergic reactions, and forgotten medication),
- (3) access-related events (clotting, infiltration, poor blood flow, difficult cannulation),
- (4) dialysis errors, and
- (5) loss of excess blood or prolonged bleeding.

Objectives

To increase the patient's safety by reducing and avoiding incidents as a consequence of falls.

Methods

We designed a screening questionnaire to determine the patients' individual risk of falling. In these questionnaires, the patients receive get one point if they have balance problems, lower limb problems, impaired vision, suffered from postural hypotension, need walking aids, suffered from previous falls, are confused, disoriented, restless, anxious, and take special medications. The higher the patient's score obtained, the more he/she the patient needs to be supervised and accompanied. The questionnaires were handed out to the patients of our dialysis clinic in the beginning of 2017. In the course of the year, patients were monitored by means of the questionnaire. With the questionnaire, patients were identified and ranked with a score, and depending on the score they were followed, supervised and cared of. The patient's reassessment is done quarterly for stable patients and as necessary for instable patients.

Results

After the questionnaire was distributed, the following scores were awarded: Of a total of 89 patients, 49.43% had a score of 0 points so they do not have any problems. 50.56% of the patients have different scores: 24% had a score of 1; 22% had a score of 2; 16% had a score of 3; 22% had a score of 4; and 16% had a score of 5 to 8, a relatively high falling risk. Analysing the data collected through the questionnaire revealed: 21% of patients had balance problems, 17% lower limb problems, 12% impaired vision, 10% suffered from postural hypotension, 9% needed walking aids and 7% suffered from previous falls (but not at our centre). Other evaluated less frequent problems were anxiety and restlessness, hearing impairment, disorientation, or confusion.

Conclusion

Following screening and scoring regarding the patient's individual risk of falling, patients were monitored, accompanied, tracked in dependence of the score they obtained. We did not observe any fall-related incidences.

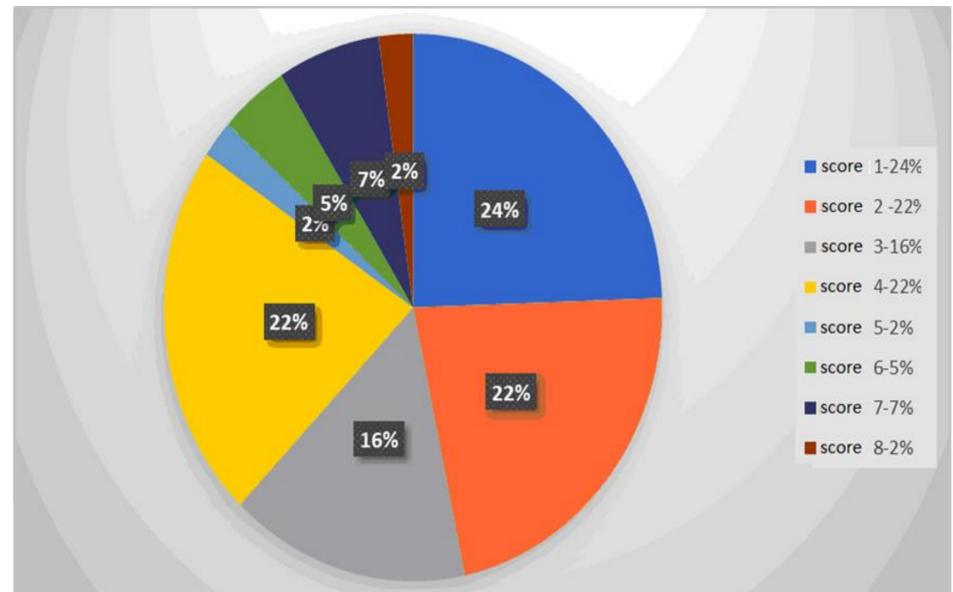


Figure 1

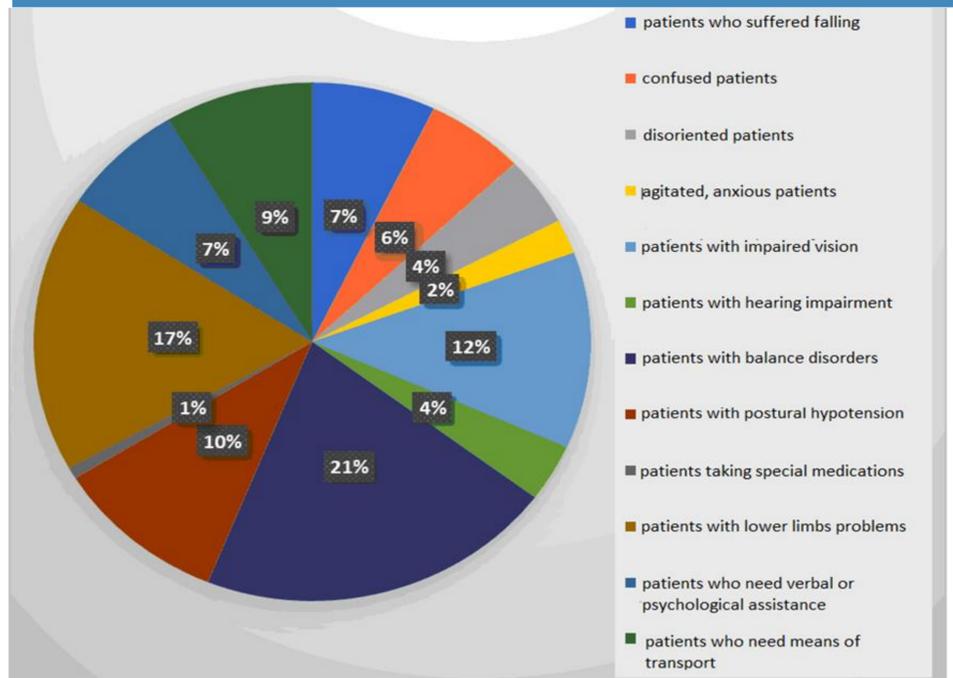


Figure 2

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