

# The experiences of husbands who support their wives undergoing hemodialysis over a long period

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## Preface

In Japan, wives have traditionally played the role of homemaker (housework, childrearing, etc.) If such women undergo hemodialysis treatment, their husbands, being the closest people to them, will be expected to provide some form of support. However, husbands also have a social role to play, and having to deal with the complex associated with hemodialysis may hinder their productive activities. Therefore, we conducted a study to clarify the experiences of husbands who help their wives undergo hemodialysis while pursuing their careers. The ultimate aim of the study was to obtain hints regarding nursing care for families.

## Purpose

Clarify the experiences of husbands who help their wives undergo hemodialysis while pursuing their careers, and discuss the nursing that families require.

## Method

This study was conducted on nine consenting participants who could stably reflect on their experiences. These participants were the husbands of hemodialysis patients belonging to an association of kidney disease patients in A Prefecture, to whom we were introduced by the association's chairman. The average age of the participants was 62.7 years, and the average number of years their wives had received hemodialysis was 12.6 years. We conducted semi-structured interviews on the nine participants and then performed qualitative inductive analysis.

## Results

From the husbands' statements, we identified 145 codes, representing experience codes, 43 sub-categories, 17 categories, and eight core categories. Organizing the data according to this process revealed four different experience stages (Figure 1.)

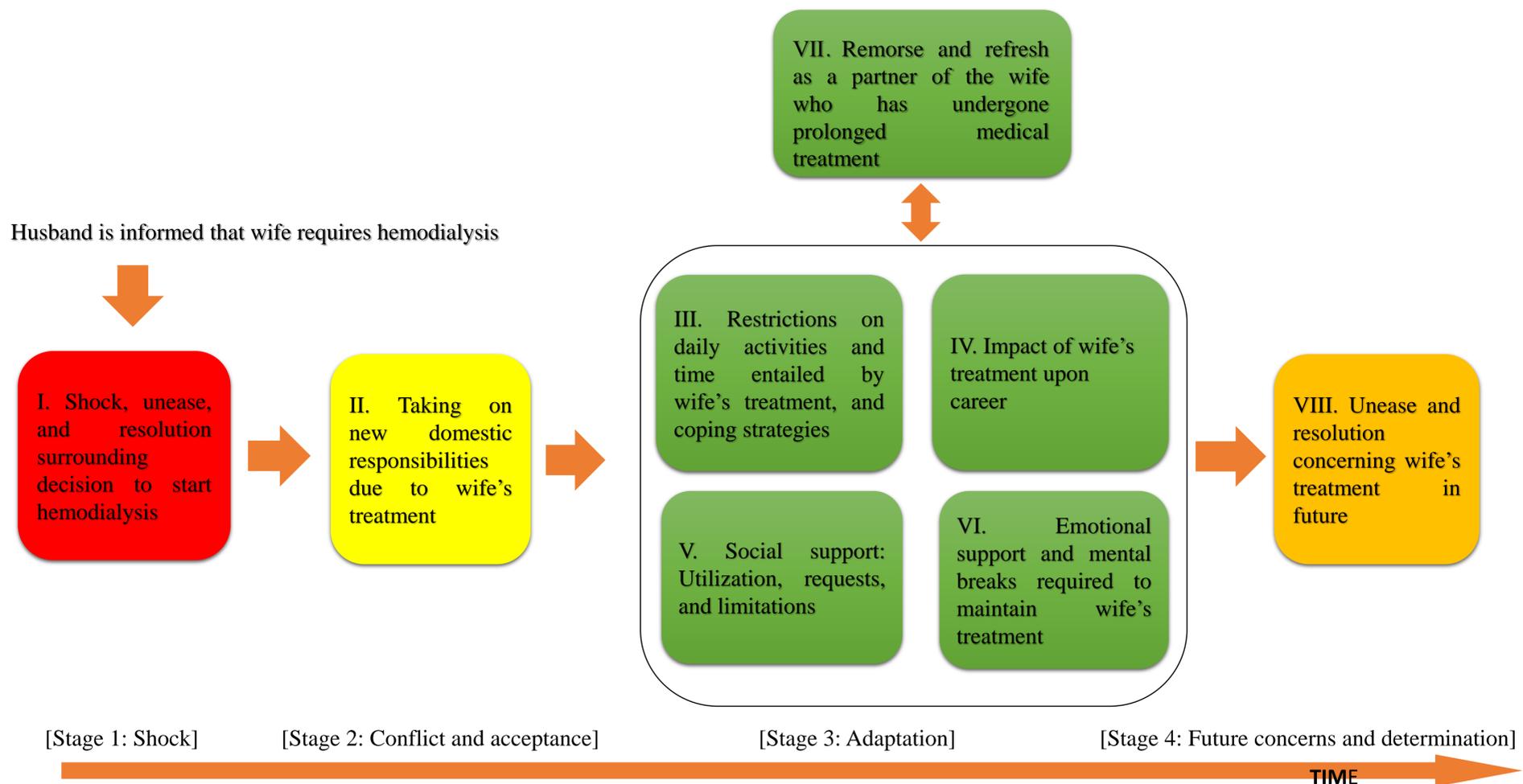


Figure 1: Experience process of husbands help their wives undergo hemodialysis while pursuing their careers

## Discussion

The experience of the husbands comprised four stages, resembling Cohn's disability acceptance process. We will now discuss the form of nursing required for each stage.

**Stage 1: Shock** At this stage, the husbands experienced shock and unease about the future upon learning that their wife's condition has deteriorated and that hemodialysis is required. There needs to be a form of support that listens to their concerns and helps them achieve emotional stability.

**Stage 2: Conflict and Acceptance** At this stage, the husbands started taking on new domestic and social roles, and this mental burden produced role conflict. It is essential that nurses introduce husbands to a family members of patients association and help them devise strategies, referring to initiatives taken by other families.

**Stage 3: Adaptation** This is the stage when the husbands sought to perform their new roles and adapt to the situation. The prolongation of treatment made it difficult to cope with the situation within the family alone, and so social support was desired. Thus, it is necessary to provide a system of social support.

**Stage 4: Future Concerns and Determination** The husbands were gripped with unease as to whether the treatment could continue as it had theretofore considering that they and their wives are growing increasingly old, frail, and poorer. On the other hand, the husbands also expressed their determination to continue supporting their wives as best they could. Regarding nursing support, there needs to be enhanced welfare system that takes into account the aging of hemodialysis patient and their husbands.

These stages are sequential, and the husbands move back and forth through the stages as they come to grips with the reality of the situation. In this sense, it is the same as the disability acceptance process.

## Conclusion

The results suggested that the experience of working husbands whose wives are undergoing hemodialysis comprise four stages, and that a different form of nursing support is required at each stage.