



# 14<sup>th</sup> SINGAPORE PUBLIC HEALTH & OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE CONFERENCE

15-16 October 2019 · Equarius Hotel

## PREVENTIVE HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD

### PERSPECTIVES ON DECISION MAKING AMONGST OLDER END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS IN SINGAPORE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Emeline Han<sup>1\*</sup>, Victoria Haldane<sup>1\*</sup>, Joel Jun Kai Koh<sup>1\*</sup>, Rina Yu Chin Quek<sup>1</sup>, Semra Ozdemir<sup>2</sup>, Eric Andrew Finkelstein<sup>2</sup>, Tazeen Hasan Jafar<sup>2</sup>, Hui-Lin Choong<sup>3</sup>, Sheryl Gan<sup>3</sup>, Lydia WW Lim<sup>3</sup>, Farah Shiraz<sup>1</sup>, Helena Legido-Quigley<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore. 12 Science Drive 2, #10-03, Tahir Foundation Building, Singapore 117549

<sup>2</sup> Duke NUS Medical School, 8 College Road, Singapore 169857

<sup>3</sup> Dept of Renal Medicine, Singapore General Hospital, Outram Road, Singapore 169608

\*Joint first authors

#### **Background**

End-stage renal disease (ESRD) is increasing both globally and in Asia. Singapore has the fifth highest incidence of ESRD worldwide, a trend that is predicted to rise. Older patients with ESRD are faced with a choice of hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis or conservative management; all of which have their risks and benefits. This study seeks to explore perspectives on decision making amongst older ( $\geq 70$ ) Singaporean ESRD patients and their caregivers to undergo (or not to undergo) dialysis.

#### **Methods**

This qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews with 7 peritoneal dialysis patients, 5 haemodialysis patients, 4 patients on non-dialysis supportive care, and 7 caregivers.

#### **Results**

While some patients believed that they had made an independent treatment decision, others reported feeling like they had no choice in the matter or that they were strongly persuaded by their doctors and/or family members to undergo dialysis. Patients reported decision-making factors including loss of autonomy in daily life, financial burden (on themselves or on their families), caregiving burden, alternative medicine, symptoms and disease progression. Caregivers also reported concerns about financial and caregiving burden.

#### **Conclusion**

This study has identified several factors that should be considered in the design and implementation of decision aids to help older ESRD patients in Singapore make informed treatment decisions, including patients' and caregivers' decision-making factors as well as the relational dynamics between patients, caregivers and doctors.