Unmet symptoms in Chronic Kidney Disease

Anaemia and Pruritus



EKPF European Kidney Patients Federation

Hackhofergasse 8

1190 Wien

Viena

www.ekpf.eu

info@ekpf.eu

Administrative headquarters

FEDERACIÓN NACIONAL ALCER

Calle Constancia 35. Local 2

28002. Madrid

915 610 837

informacion@alcer.org

www.alcer.org

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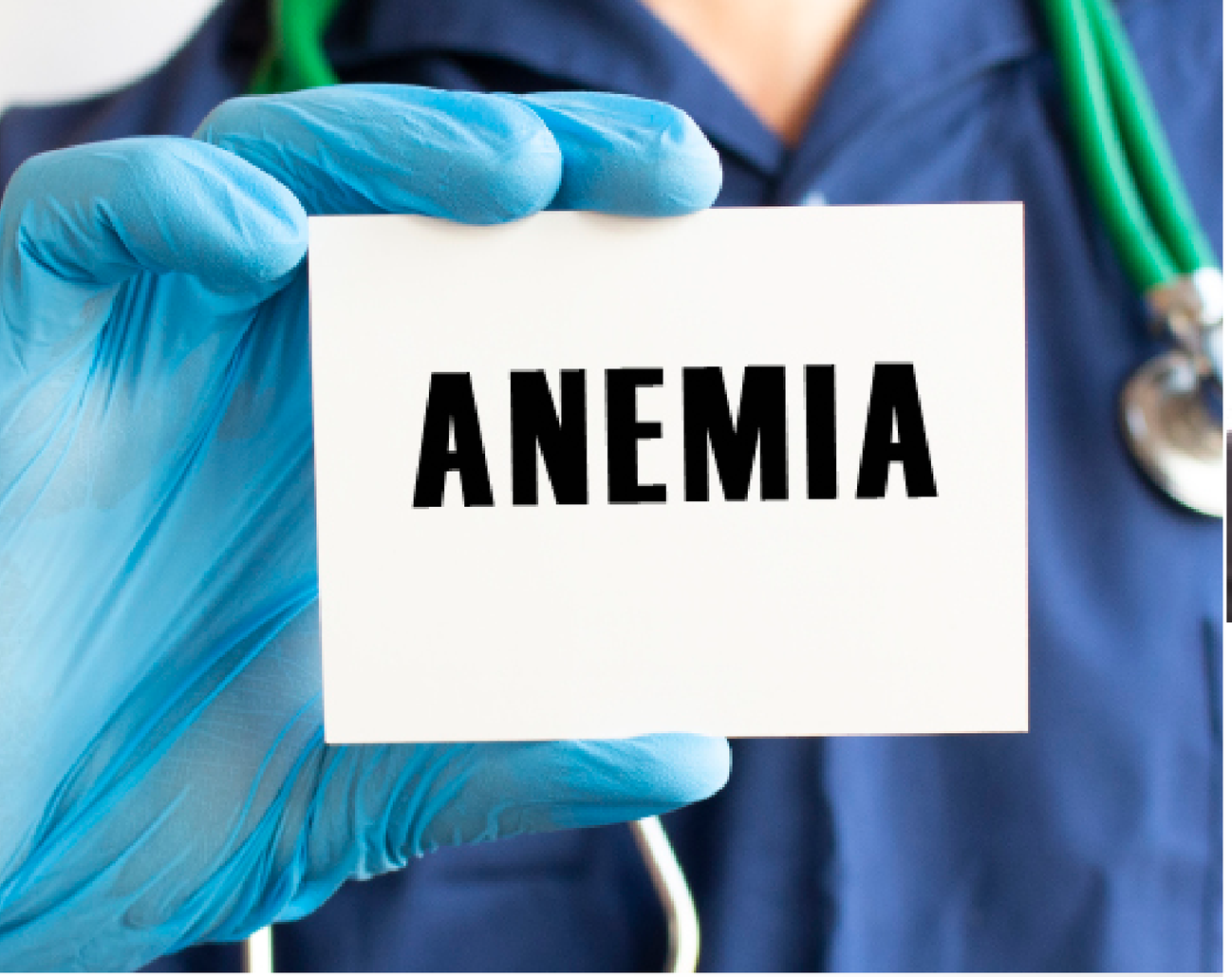
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Anemia

Why is Anemia a key problem?

Anemia in CKD is frequent and has a huge impact on:

quality of life
ability to function
brain function and depression
heart problems and progression of kidney function



Suni Bhandari
Honorary Clinical Proffesor. Renal Medicine Hull University Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust United Kingdom

Suni Bhandari
Anemia

Good anemia care can improve **the chance of job integration**. If patients feel better, they can do more and that is very important, because it is about having as normal a life as possible. The better we can make them feel, the more likely they are to function better and be able to work.

Iron and improvement of anemia **has been shown to have a great impact on patients' quality of life.**

Iron deficiency is like running out of fuel. Iron deficiency also causes hair loss, which is devastating for some people and could be easily corrected.

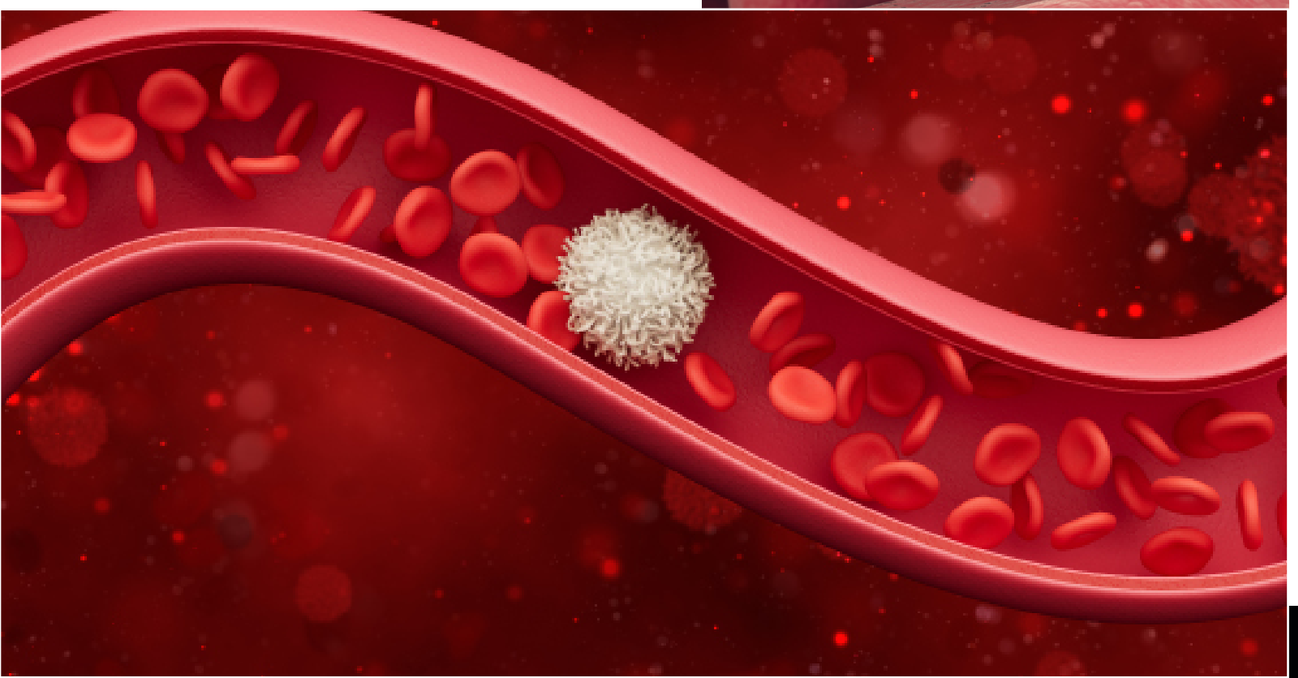
What are the symptoms of anemia?

- feeling tired all the time
- looking pale
- Chest pain because of heart involvement
- Restless legs symptoms. They jump all the time including at night

Current treatment

- Iron: oral, diet or intravenous. For dialysis patients, intravenous iron is the easiest way.
- Therapy with erythropoiesis, very important once you replace the iron.
- Blood transfusion in critical situations, but we try to avoid that.





Kidney failure has so many symptoms that we don't really know what the **cause of the depression** is, but we do know that anaemia is one part that we can fix. **Correcting anemia can help a lot**, and although it can't solve everything, it has a close relationship with depression.

The benefits of improving anemia are:

- improving quality of life
- improving exercise capacity
- improving sexual function
- improving immune function
- improving cognitive function
- improving endocrine function
- Better defense for infections (especially important during COVID-19 year)



Why is CKD associated pruritus a key problem for kidney patients?

CKD-aP is not only important because of how unpleasant it is, but also because it:

- Reduces quality of life
- Increases mortality
- Decreases quality of sleep
- Induces the onset of depression



Emilio Sánchez
Chief of Nephrology Hospital Universitario de Cabueñes
Gijón (Spain)

Emilio Sánchez
Pruritus

Pruritus is an unpleasant sensation of the skin that causes the desire to scratch. **We prefer to use the expression CKDa-P (chronic kidney disease associated pruritus)** because uremic may lead us to think that the itching is caused by accumulation of toxins.

The first diagnosis requires the exclusion of other causes. If there is no other underlying cause we can think of CKD-aP. **Pruritus is usually bilaterally symmetric and can be localized or generalized.**

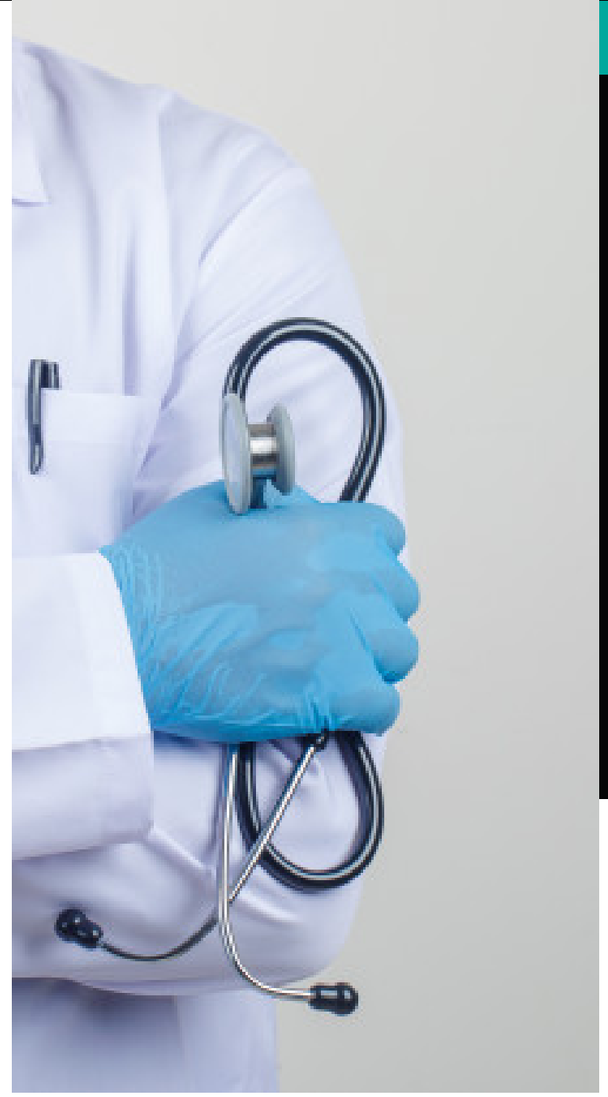
An added problem with pruritus is that we do not have adequate tools for diagnosis and also that treatment is not yet very effective.

EMILIO SÁNCHEZ

Pruritus

Why is CKD-aP a key problem for nephrologists?

- It is estimated that in moderate or very severe forms it affects 40% of people on dialysis.
- Less than 50% of patients report pruritus because they do not believe it may have anything to do with CKD or dialysis.
- Almost 70% of nephrologists underestimate the problem of pruritus.
- It increases healthcare costs.



The presence of CKD-aP in patients **disrupts emotions and makes them feel frustrated or embarrassed**, as well as more upset. This emotional state may interfere with the patients' ability to work or socialize. They feel depressed, avoid social contact and have problems working.

Better communication between physicians and patients could improve knowledge about the effect of pruritus.

The problem of pruritus is often underestimated. Good treatment could improve when patients suffer from intense nighttime itching that affects their rest and impacts their quality of life.

It can also affect the patient's emotional health. They feel very bad with a very low quality of life and very embarrassed. **It is important to talk and make them feel that professionals are doing something for them**. There are some new treatments I'm really looking forward to, like Difekelikefalin, which can represent a before and after.

How we can improve CKD-aP?

Improved diagnosis is essential. **Nephrologists should be proactive in asking patients if they are suffering from pruritus**. It is important to reach out to patients and talk to them. Hemodialysis patients come to the hospital very frequently, so any doctor or nurse has plenty of time to talk to them, and it is important to ask them about itching. Sometimes it's frustrating because we don't have the right tools to diagnose and we don't have the right drugs to treat it.