



AMERICAN NEPHROLOGY NURSES' ASSOCIATION

ANNA'S 42ND NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
MARCH 27-30, 2011
HYNES CONVENTION CENTER, BOSTON, MA

The Use of Narratives in Chronic Kidney Disease

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The issue of sexuality and its impact on chronic kidney disease patients (CKD) is a very pertinent and sensitive aspect in the delivery of nephrology nursing care. The majority of studies address this area from a quantitative biomedical perspective. There is a paucity of qualitative research concerning how patients construct their sexuality whilst living with this chronic illness. Through the use of narratives or storytelling, patients may be in a better position to relay their accounts of living with CKD and the effect that this illness has on their sexuality. Molzahn et al (2008) assert that there is limited research that has addressed the narratives of individuals with CKD.

The aim of this presentation is to address the methodological issues of using illness narratives in assisting patients living with CKD to recount their experiences regarding the sensitive subject of sexuality. The challenges that nephrology nurses may encounter when utilizing narratives as a means of research will be discussed including the importance of communication skills. The decisions regarding sampling and data collection along with logistical and ethical issues will be addressed. It is anticipated that through exploring the narrative dimensions of illness experiences (Kierans, 2005) we can come to a more comprehensive understanding of the means in which patients live with their CKD on a daily basis.

Abstract selected for presentation at ANNA's 42nd National Symposium, Boston, MA, 2011