Background

Hemodialysis diet is a complex regimen that requires patients to follow a strict diet and fluid restrictions. This study aimed to explore the barriers to adherence to hemodialysis dietary recommendations among adult hemodialysis patients in a Northeastern metropolitan area.

Methods

We conducted a digital, semi-structured, telephone interview survey of hemodialysis patients. The interview duration was approximately 20 minutes (mean 13.7, range 8 to 34 minutes).

Participants

We included participants who had been on hemodialysis for at least 3 months and were ≥18 years of age. The sample was largely male, unemployed, and African American or Caucasian.

Results

Themes identified by study participants included barriers associated with:

- Time and Convenience
- Financial Constraints
- Experience of Routine Dietary Counseling

"If you don’t eat before you get up and get out, and then you’re hungry when you get out, and there really isn’t a place where you can get some regular food. You might go to McDonald’s and all that fast food really isn’t good for you.”

"We live on SSB [social security benefits], and combined, after we pay utilities and everything, it hurts. We are down to $200 in the bank, and that ain’t crap to have, you know what I mean?"

Limitations

- All hemodialysis centers were in one geographical area
- Sample predominately male, unemployed, and African American or Caucasian
- Little variation within or between groups
- Statements not cross-referenced with actual dietary sodium intake
- Participants had extensive hemodialysis experience

Conclusions

- Cost and time limitations were identified by ESRD patients as important barriers to dietary adherence.
- Participants satisfied with dietary counseling efforts made, but perceived difficulty individualizing recommendations and desired greater customization.
- Results could potentially inform interventions geared to reduce impact of identified barriers.