

Dialysis treatment and regulations require updates

Extracted from the introduction by Dato' Dr. Zaki Morad, chairman of the National Kidney Foundation (NKF), Malaysia, during the 8th NKF Annual Dialysis Meeting, 16 October, Kuala Lumpur.

Hemodialysis treatment in the country has grown tremendously over the last 20 years. There are now about 20,000 patients on hemodialysis treatment, or about 165 per million population. This is a remarkable achievement, considering Malaysia is a middle-income country with a gross national income of about US\$7,000 per capita. The achievement is due to the close collaboration between the government, particularly the Ministry of Health (MOH), non-governmental non-profit organizations and the private sector.

The rapid growth has posed many new challenges. Access to care is not a major problem now. The cost of care has been reasonable and has not grown much over the years. The challenge is mainly in the clinical area. Patient demographics have changed, with the majority of new patients taken in for hemodialysis treatment in the last few years being diabetics. There is also a significant proportion of elderly patients. The hemodialysis management of these patients poses particular challenges. In this country, he-

modialysis is the predominant form of renal replacement therapy, accounting for almost 80 percent of the treatment. While outcomes of hemodialysis treatment have been commendable based on data from the National Renal Registry, more can and should be done.

In 1995, the department of nephrology of Hospital Kuala Lumpur produced the 'Quality and Standards on Hemodialysis Treatment' as a guide to the MOH's hemodialysis program. Part of the standards were later incorporated into the regulations (Part XXII) of the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act (PHFSA). The imposition of the regulations by the MOH has, to a large extent, improved the standards of care and safety for patients. However, the standards formulated in 1995 need to be reviewed as, over the years, not only have the patients' demographic/clinical settings changed, but also dialysis technology and practices.

The National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia (NKFM) organized a workshop on hemodialysis standards from the perspective

of the non-government organizations and private hemodialysis providers. We hope the outcome of the workshop will be presented to the MOH for its consideration when it plans to review provisions in the regulations of the PHFSA pertaining to provision of hemodialysis treatment. **MT**

Out with the old, in with the new

Kidney disease is a growing health problem in the country, with dialysis being the main treatment for renal impairment. However, the guidelines need to be updated, as technology advances and the population's needs change. The introduction to the 8th NKF Annual Dialysis Meeting highlights the urgent need to update the 1995 hemodialysis guidelines, with input from various sources (eg, the workshop) to help modify the guidelines. **-Ed**