



**QUEEN'S  
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**SCHOOL OF  
NURSING AND  
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**PhD Project Title: Co-designing a sexual health e-resource to support patients undergoing renal replacement therapy (RRT) and their partners within the United Kingdom**

**Abstract:**

**Background:** Sexual dysfunction is a very common complication of renal replacement therapy (Pavone et al. 2021; Keskin et al. 2019) and has been recognized as an important research priority (Harrison et al. 2020; Kalantar Zadeh et al. 2020; Pyrgidis et al. 2021). Epidemiological evidence suggests that women and men with End-Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) receiving renal replacement therapy may have more than 107% and 195% increased prevalence of sexual dysfunction than their healthy peers, respectively (Luo et al. 2020). However, sexual health concerns are not routinely addressed by renal healthcare professionals with many reporting a lack of knowledge and confidence in this area (Hendren et al. 2019; McKie et al. 2021). Consequently, there is significant lack of sexual dysfunction awareness, knowledge, and effective interventions to improve outcomes for patients and their partners. The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence, support needs and co-design a sexual health e-resource for patients undergoing RRT and their partners within the United Kingdom.

**Objectives:** 1) To determine the prevalence of sexual dysfunction (with validated components) in patients receiving RRT and their partners; 2) purposively sampled follow-up semi-structured interviews to understand the experiences and support needs of patients undergoing RRT and their partners; 3) co-design and evaluate a sexual health e-resource for patients receiving RRT and their partners.

**Methods:** This is a longitudinal mixed methods study design using an online survey (with validated components) and purposively sampled follow-up semi structured interviews. Standardised measures include sexual dysfunction, anxiety and depression, Health-Related Quality of Life, and body Image. Open ended questions and semi-structured interviews will explore experiences and support needs. Focus groups with stakeholders will be used to feedback previous findings and and develop an appropriate e-resource for all relevant stakeholders (e.g., patients, partners and renal healthcare professionals).

**Outcomes:** The findings will: 1) address a clear gap in knowledge regarding sexual dysfunction in patients undergoing RRT and their partners; 2) identify opportunities in the current care pathway to introduce enhanced support for patients and their partners; 3) underscore the need for accessible educational resources and training for renal healthcare professionals in this important area of patient care.

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