



Hypertension and  
Kidney Specialists



Transitional care unit  
A physician's perspective

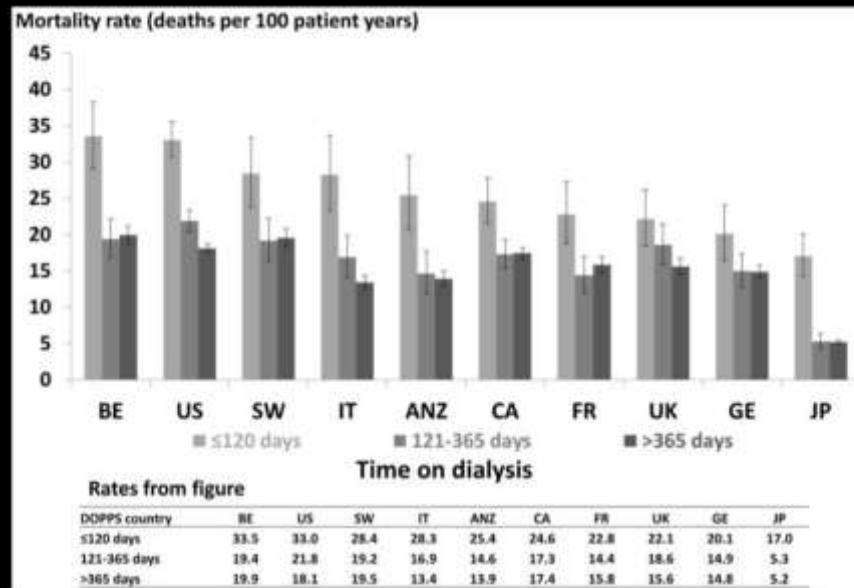
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## Transitional care unit

- Dedicated space created to cater to the most vulnerable time in the life of an ESRD patient.
- 52% of patients crash into dialysis...suboptimal start.
  - 24% of patients crash without ever being diagnosed with CKD
  - Sizeable portion of patients, irrespective of pre-dialysis nephrology care, may not have access to adequate preparation due to sudden rapid GFR decline.
  - Crashes increase costs per patient by approximately \$53,000 during the first year on dialysis
  - 74% of patients start dialysis without the preferred vascular access in place

# Transitional Care Unit

## Why:



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**Figure 1** Mortality After the Start of Dialysis Countries were ordered by mortality rate at ≤120 days. ANZ=Australia and New Zealand; BE= Belgium; CA= Canada; FR= France; GE= Germany; IT= Italy; JPN= Japan; SW= Sweden; UK= United Kingdom; US= United States Error bars correspond to 95% confidence intervals calculated using the Byer approximation

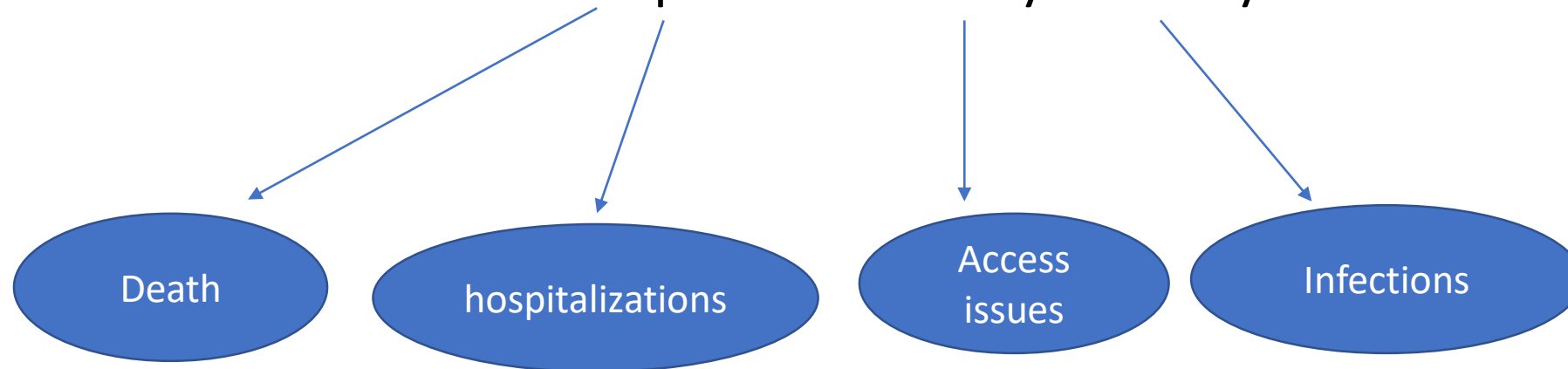
- [Kidney Int. 2014 Jan; 85\(1\): 158–165.](#)

Transitional  
Care Unit:  
Who:

- Most patients start dialysis sub optimally
- Dialysis education may have occurred months before
- Rapid or accelerated loss in egfr.
- All patients can benefit

# Transitional care unit

- Impact first 90 days of dialysis



- High cost
- High hospitalization rates,
- Mortality

2017 USRDS Annual Data Report: Epidemiology of Kidney Disease in the United States, Bethesda, MD, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, 2017

# Historical perspective

Dialysis orientation unit. Established at northwestern Kidney Centers in 1981: Dr Joel Eshbach

2-month stabilization program emphasizing modality , diet education, patient “rehabilitation,” and transitioning safely to home dialysis.

- Physically separate unit,
- high staff-to-patient ratio, and
- close collaboration with the home training group. Unit staff members were selected not only on the basis of clinical skill but also on the ability to empathize and educate.

93 patients in the first year

- 62% chose a home modality
- 24% chose self incenter program
- 10% chose incenter dialysis

Eschbach JW, Seymour M, Potts A, Clark M, Blagg CR: A hemodialysis orientation unit. Nephron 33: 106–110, 1983

# TCU structure

3-4 week program.

3-4 treatments per week.

Provide extensive education and curriculum with goals identified each week.

Dedicated space.

Dedicated and knowledgeable staff model interested in teaching

Flexibility

Ability to deal with high volume

Buy in from Physicians

Support from you dialysis vendor

# Transitional Care



Clinical stabilization of the patient

Dedicated team focused on this population  
Tailor dialysis to the individual



Educate the patient.

Modality  
Nutrition  
Financial aspects



Emotional and psychologic support



Welcoming environment



Streamline access appointments and transplant referrals



# Local data

A horizontal bar chart with four rows. Each row consists of a blue bar on the left and a white box on the right. The blue bars contain white text, and the white boxes are empty. The data points are: 120 patients to date, 36 have chosen PD, 7 HHD, and 35% home penetrance.

Metric	Value
Total patients to date	120
Patients who have chosen PD	36
Number of HHD	7
Home penetrance percentage	35%

120 patients to date

36 have chosen PD

7 HHD

35% home penetrance

# Transitional care unit

- Empowers patient.
- Patient and physician can choose the modality that fits the patient best
- Become better patients overall:
  - 27% lower missed treatment rate
  - 12% lower CVC rate
  - Decreased access placement latency
  - Decreased hospitalization rates and mortality
  - Improved transplant referral
  - Improved adoption of home therapies
  - Reduce disparities in home therapies

[Clin J Am Soc Nephrol. 2019 May 7; 14\(5\): 765–767.](#)



# TCU Challenges

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- Throughput and consistent census
- Bottlenecks related to modality choice