



**Tehran University of Medical Sciences
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**Exploring Lived Experiences of Adults Living with
ESRD in Ghana: A Phenomenology study**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements PhD Degree in Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Chronic kidney disease (CKD) has been recognized as a leading public health problem worldwide. However, in many countries especially in Africa, there is a shortage of renal replacement services leading to a lot of suffering and avoidable deaths. This therefore, means that the option left is conservative management which is less expensive and proves to benefit these patients more than renal replacement therapy (RRT). This research therefore is aimed at filling the gap in knowledge about the meaning of living with ESRD in Ghanaian patients yet to start renal replacement therapy so that care based on their lived experiences will help alleviate suffering before end of life.

Study aims: This study aimed to explore the meaning of living with ESRD for Ghanaian patients yet to start renal replacement therapy.

Methodology: This qualitative study was conducted using Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology in order to interpret the lived experiences of patients living with end stage renal disease yet to start RRT in Ghana. In this study, a total of thirteen participants were purposefully selected, and data were collected through individual, semi-structured and deep interviews. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed by the Diekelman, Allen and Tanner approach.

Results: After the final analysis, five themes emerged: (1) Spiritual fluctuation, (2) Living in uncertainty (3) Period of agony and frustration, (4) Tough fortification and (5) Changed in roles and status. These themes emerged from eight sub-themes. The findings of the present study provide insight into what the lived experiences of patients living with ESRD yet to start renal replacement therapy are. Always in a state of physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual suffering bringing about posttraumatic or adversarial growth was identified as expressing the essence of ESRD in the lives of ESRD patients. These participants experience of ESRD and their interpretation of the meaning of living with ESRD helped them to bring to being modes of action and style to their ways of living in other to create diverse ways of living with the condition.

Consequently, positive changes were observed in participants of this study. This type of change is known in psychological literature as posttraumatic growth, stress-related growth, positive adjustment, positive adaptation, and adversarial growth. The idea is that it is through the process of struggling with adversity that changes may arise that propel the individual to a higher level of functioning than that which existed before the event. This higher level of functioning was observed in the participants of this study through their narrations.

Conclusion: The results of this study may benefit nursing care in terms of considering the patients' lived experiences to provide holistic and person-centered care based on the meanings identified by patients living with end-stage renal disease. It is therefore, suggested that Ministry of health and Ghana health service in conjunction with the world health organization and non-governmental organizations who are into health issues combine their efforts and resources in tackling all the myriad of issues mentioned above.

Keywords: Renal insufficiency; Hermeneutic; phenomenology; Ghana; Lived experience