



World Kidney Day focuses on women's health

Canadian kidney organizations call for education, engagement and research investments

[MARCH 7, 2018 - MONTREAL] One in 10 Canadians has kidney disease. Are you, or is someone you know affected?

This World Kidney Day, March 8th, The Kidney Foundation of Canada along with the Can-SOLVE CKD Network and the Canadian Society of Nephrology are urging Canadians to learn more about their kidney health. Ask your doctor about a simple blood test that can identify common kidney problems, and have your blood pressure monitored regularly.

"This year, World Kidney Day falls on the same date as International Women's Day, offering a unique opportunity for us to focus on women's kidney health," said Elizabeth, Myles, Executive Director of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. "The Kidney Foundation of Canada, in partnership with Can-SOLVE CKD and the Canadian Society of Nephrology, encourage and empower women to educate themselves to maintain a kidney healthy lifestyle."

Through the theme of this year's World Kidney Day, "Kidneys and Women's Health – Include, Value, Empower", the international organization is calling for affordable and equitable access to kidney health education, care and prevention for all women and girls globally.

Four million Canadians live with chronic kidney disease (CKD). An estimated 3,000 Canadians die from kidney disease each year. It is the 9th leading cause of death for women in this country. Indigenous peoples, children, and the elderly are particularly vulnerable.

"By involving patients, many of whom are women, in identifying research questions and contributing to the network's work as a whole, we are working to make a real difference in the statistics and the lives of Canadians living with kidney disease," said Dr. Adeera Levin who, along with Dr. Braden Manns, are Co-Leads of the Can-SOLVE CKD Network. "In support of the unique health issues of women and girls living with kidney disease, the network has recently appointed Dr. Sofia Ahmed as Sex and Gender Lead. In this role, Dr. Ahmed will advise our research teams on issues related to sex and gender as they carry out their work."

Women are more at risk for certain kidney diseases, such as Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) and both acute and chronic kidney infections. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) can affect a woman's ability to start a family, and raise healthy children. Pregnancies among women with kidney disease carry different risks, depending on levels of kidney function, and can lead to serious health complications such as pre-eclampsia, and preterm births.

“There is no cure for kidney disease, and it has devastating consequences on the quality and quantity of life for those affected,” said Dr. Deborah Zimmerman, President Elect of the Canadian Society of Nephrology (CSN). “Kidney disease impacts women of all ages, limiting their ability to build a career and start a family. Well-earned retirement may be replaced by treatment schedules that interfere with the ability to travel and enjoy grandchildren. We need to find better ways to minimize the tremendous burden of symptoms, and simplify treatments. Helping the patients of today and tomorrow requires a renewed investment in research.”

To find out if you have any of the risk factors for kidney disease, take this short quiz: www.kidney.ca/risk

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KIDNEY DISEASE IN CANADA

- Four million Canadians live with chronic kidney disease (CKD)
- An estimated 3,000 Canadians die of CKD each year
- 47 per cent of new patients are under the age of 65
- You can lose more than 50 per cent of your kidney function before symptoms appear
- CKD disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples, children, and the elderly
- Average annual cost of dialysis is \$92,000 per patient
- Annual cost of CKD to the Canadian healthcare system is estimated at \$50-billion

KIDNEY DISEASE AROUND THE WORLD

CKD affects an estimated 195 million women worldwide, and recent studies suggest those numbers are rising. In many low-income countries or those without adequate healthcare, it is especially challenging for women to access dialysis treatments, or kidney transplants. Globally, kidney disease is the 8th leading cause of premature death in women, with close to 600,000 women losing their lives each year.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) affects as many as 10 to 15 per cent of the population worldwide. It strongly impairs quality of life, and reduces life expectancy. While some kidney diseases are hereditary, researchers are working to better understand the complex factors that influence kidney health.

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The Kidney Foundation of Canada (KFOC) is the national volunteer organization committed to eliminating the burden of kidney disease through funding and stimulating innovative research; providing education and support; promoting access to high quality healthcare; and increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing

kidney health and organ donation. Since 1964 The Kidney Foundation of Canada has contributed over \$119 million to medical research projects to ensure that treatment options and patient results continuously improve.

The Can-SOLVE CKD Network is a pan-Canadian patient-oriented kidney research initiative established in 2016 to help transform treatment and care for Canadians living with, or at risk of developing kidney disease. The network is funding 18 research projects, with questions based on key issues identified by patients. The Can-SOLVE CKD Network is also working to address the gaps in kidney health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in this country.

The Canadian Society of Nephrology (CSN) is a society of physicians and scientists specializing in the care of people with kidney disease, and in research related to the kidney and kidney disease. Their vision is that all Canadians with or at risk of kidney disease will receive optimal patient-centered care and achieve best outcomes. Members of the CSN support innovative research to improve outcomes for patients with kidney disease. The Society also holds workshops and training programs for nephrologists. This year the CSN is marking a milestone 50th Anniversary.