

Docs Not Checking Kidneys Enough

Type 1 & Type 2 Last year, in a large study of people with type 2, British researchers found that nearly 30 percent of the participants had undiagnosed late-stage kidney disease, often because of infrequent testing and inadequate testing methods.

Now U.S. researchers in the multi-center “Translating Research Into Action for Diabetes” study report that doctors are not testing kidney function in their patients with diabetes nearly enough, nor are they sufficiently prescribing medication that can help slow the progression of kidney disease in their patients who test positive for it.

Researchers reviewed the medical records of 5,378 people with diabetes. They divided the participants into two groups. Those in the first group did not have known kidney disease and were not taking either ACE inhibitors or angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs), which are blood pressure medications known to



protect the kidneys. The researchers found that only 52 percent of these participants had been screened for albuminuria (protein in the urine) during the 18 months prior to the study even though current recommendations advise yearly kidney tests for people with diabetes.

The second group included people who had known kidney disease or who were taking either ACE inhibitors or ARBs. Yet even among these participants, only 63 percent were screened during the 18 months before the study.

In both groups, tests were

administered less often in participants who were older than 65.

In a separate analysis, researchers found that of the participants who were not taking ACE inhibitors or ARBs when the study began but who later tested positive for albuminuria, only 47 percent began treatment with either drug. The researchers say this may be because doctors did not prescribe the drugs or because of poor communication between patients and their doctors or the costs and side effects of the drugs.

The message here is that it's up to you to remind your doctor to check your kidney function once a year—even if you already have kidney disease or your doctor has prescribed an ACE inhibitor or ARB.

This study was published in the August 2006 issue of *Diabetes Care*.

—Terri D'Arrigo

The Research Shorts section features articles about cutting-edge research relating to diabetes. The studies presented in this section involve products, technologies, and theories that are in the early stages of testing and development. Because there's no way to know which studies will pass the test of time, it's important that readers not base any treatment decisions on these results.