

Ethnicity could impact health of kidney transplant patients

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People's ethnicity impacts their physical activity following a kidney transplant, according to research carried out by the University of Leicester.

Transplant operations improve health and quality of life for [patients](#) with [kidney failure](#), but [cardiovascular disease](#) (CVD) remains the largest cause of mortality with people with the condition, particularly among South Asians.

A study explored ethnic differences in physical activity and functional capacity among kidney patients and showed that South Asians have significantly lower physical function compared to white British people.

NIHR-supported researchers from the Leicester Kidney Exercise Team carried out the research, which was partly funded by Kidney Research UK via a bursary which was awarded to a medical student who carried out some of the work.

Lead author Dr Alice Smith who is a Senior NHS Researcher and Team Leader for the Leicester Kidney Exercise Team, John Walls Renal Unit, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, said: "Regular exercise can help reduce the risk of CVD, but we are finding that not many patients who have undergone the transplant operation are being advised to get active.

Dr Smith, who is also from the University of Leicester Department of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation, said: "People with a South Asian origin unfortunately appear to spend more time sitting down and have lower physical capacity than those with a white background.

"Our research has shown that we need to focus on appropriate strategies to engage South Asian [kidney](#) patients in exercise to improve physical function and reduce cardiovascular risk in this particularly vulnerable population."

A total of 271 transplant patients took part in the study and they were asked to complete a physical activity questionnaire to describe their attitude towards exercise.

They were also asked how willing they were to change their [physical activity](#) behaviour.

Some participants were also asked to carry out a number of tests to measure their physical capabilities.

They took part in tests to measure their walking ability and the strength of their legs getting up from a chair. They also had their heart output and body fat measured.

Neerja Jain, Health Improvement Project Manager for Kidney Research UK, said: "This study is a prime example of evidence gaps which need to be urgently addressed so that we can understand why some people face worse health outcomes than others.

"Kidney Research UK runs a range of programmes addressing health inequalities so we can help people from communities at greater risk. Great research like this by the team at Leicester will continue to inform our work."

Researchers are now calling on healthcare professionals to adopt new ways of encouraging [kidney transplant](#) patients from the South Asian community to exercise in a bid to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease.

Provided by University of Leicester

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