

A group of people are gathered around a large table, working on a complex diagram or map. The diagram features various colored lines and shapes, including a prominent pink rectangular area in the center. The people are seen from behind, focused on their work.

# **At what eGFR should we start dialysis?**

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## No conflict of interest

This presentation is **dedicated to all our patients** and their families who come to our clinic with statements like:

- ❑ **"Doctor, mum said I might need to start dialysis now. I am afraid and I don't really want to..."** (5 years old, CAKUT)
- ❑ **"Doc, when will we start dialysis? I cannot wait any more! I am really fed up..."** (13 years old, FSGS)

# Background

**Criteria to start dialysis**

**Aim when starting dialysis**



Early

vs.

Late

# Background

## Criteria to start dialysis

1. **Uremic symptoms** (pericarditis, encephalopathy....)
2. **Abnormal biochemical findings** (severe hyperK<sup>+</sup> and/or acidosis)
3. **Diuresis-resistant fluid overload** (pulmonary oedema)
4. **Failure to grow**

## Aim when starting dialysis

1. **Prolong life**
2. **Improve life**



# When **should** children **be considered** to start dialysis ?

European Paediatric Peritoneal Dialysis Working G. Guidelines,  
Perit Dial Int 2001 **< 10-15 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**



**5      →      10      →      15 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**



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5 —————> 10 —————> 15 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>

RRT in children should be **recommended** when the eGFR further falls  
**< 8 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**

RRT in children should be **considered**  
when the eGFR falls **< 14 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**



National  
Kidney  
Foundation®

KDOQI®  
Kidney Disease  
Outcomes Quality Initiative

2006

# When **should** children **be considered** to start dialysis ?

Canadian Society of Nephrology, 2014



Start dialysis if  
**< 6 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**

European Paediatric Peritoneal Dialysis Working G. Guidelines,  
Perit Dial Int 2001 **< 10-15 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**



Close monitoring if **< 15 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**

5 —————> 10 —————> 15 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>

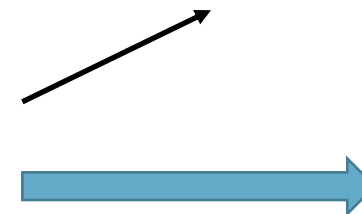
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**Update KDOQI 2015:  
symptoms & signs**

# When **should** children **be considered** to start dialysis ?

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Canadian Society of Nephrology/  
Société canadienne de néphrologie  
CSN/SCN

Start dialysis if  
**< 6 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**

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European  
society for  
paediatric  
nephrology

Close monitoring if **< 15 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**

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**NICE**

National Institute for  
Health and Care Excellence

2018: **5-7 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>** if no symptoms



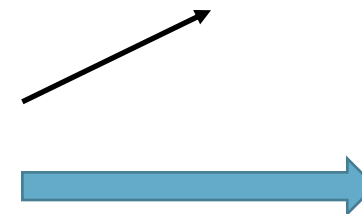
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**Update KDOQI 2015:  
symptoms & signs**



# When **should** children **be considered** to start dialysis ?

Canadian Society of Nephrology



Canadian Society of Nephrology/  
Société canadienne de néphrologie  
CSN/SCN

Start dialysis  
when eGFR  
**< 6 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**

5



## KDIGO 2019:

There is no specific eGFR for initiation of dialysis in the absence of symptoms and current data do NOT support pre-emptive dialysis initiation.

Dialysis Working Group Guidelines,

**< 6 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**



european  
society for  
paediatric  
nephrology

**3m<sup>2</sup>**

Considered  
when eGFR  
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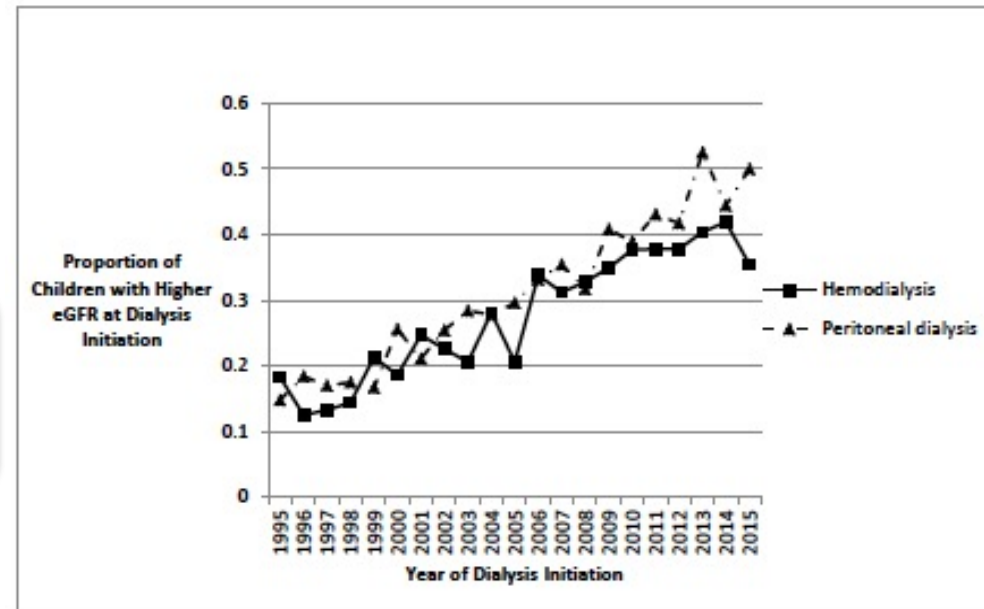
# When **are children currently starting** dialysis ?

## 1) **ESPN/ERA Registry for children**, Preka et al, Nephrol Dial Transplant 2019

Median eGFR at start of RRT was **8.2 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**  
(IQR 6.2-10.7 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>)

## 2) **US Renal Data System Registry in children**, Okuda et al, AJKD 2019

Median eGFR at start of RRT was **7.8 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>**  
[IQR 5.6-10.5 mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>]



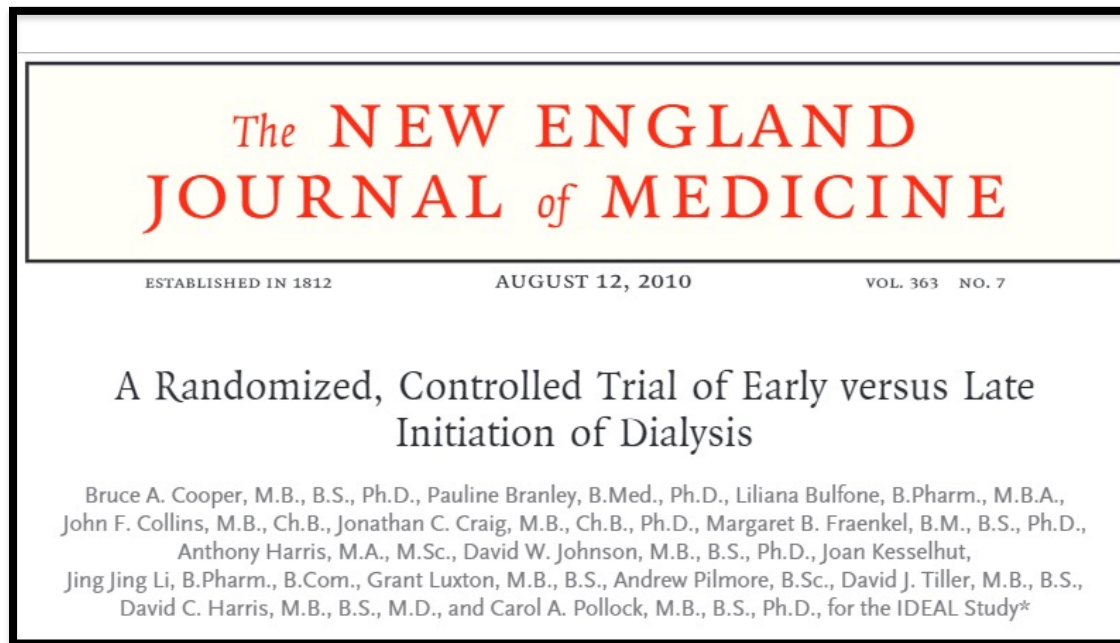
Winnicki et al, JASN 2019, Increase in children who start dialysis at higher eGFR > 10 →  
Median eGFR 12.8 (IQR 11.1-16.0)

**Poll Question (1) : According to the only RCT in adults and the 3 largest paediatric registry observational studies, what is the main conclusion regards the optimal time to start maintenance dialysis?**

- a) "The earlier the better"
- b) "The later the better"
- c) There is no evidence supporting benefit from early initiation. However, decisions in children should be made on a case-by-case basis.
- d) There is no evidence supporting benefit from early initiation. However, when eGFR is between 5 and 7 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> dialysis should always be initiated.



## Only one RCT in 2010, the “IDEAL study”

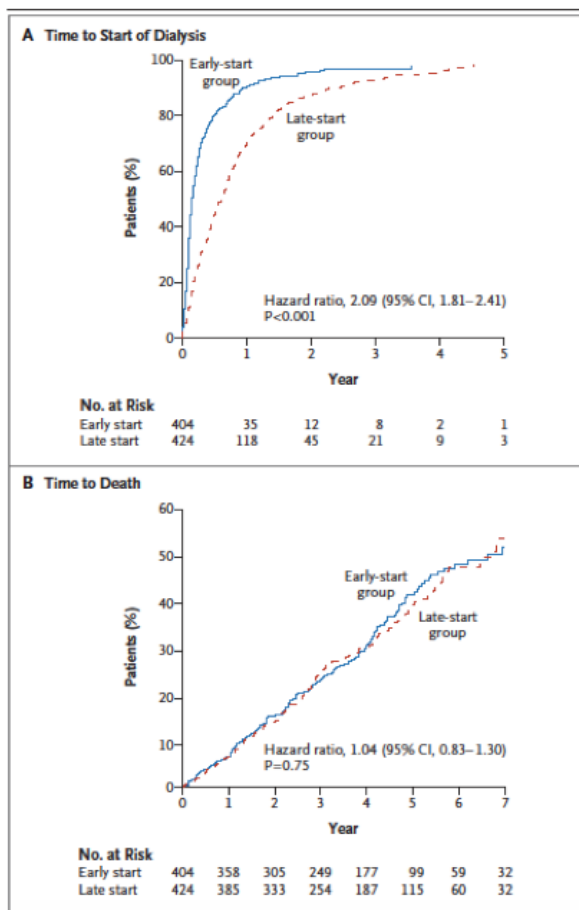


RCT between 2000-2008

828 adults

- 404 early-starters (eGFR 10-14ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> )
- 424 late-starters (eGFR 5-7 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>)
- Median follow-up: 3.59 years

## Cooper et al, IDEAL Study, NEJM 2010 :



### Primary outcome: Time-to-death

**37.6% (152/404) early-starters (eGFR 10-14)**

**36.6% (155/424) late-starters (eGFR 5-7)**

(HR with early initiation 1.04; 95% CI, 0.83-1.30,  $p=0.75$ )

**Table 2. Primary and Secondary Outcomes, Including Adverse Events.**

Outcome	Early-Start Group (N = 404)		Late-Start Group (N = 424)		Hazard Ratio with Early Start (95% CI)	P Value
	No. of Events	No. of Events/100 Patient-Yr	No. of Events	No. of Events/100 Patient-Yr		
Primary outcome: death from any cause	152	10.2	155	9.8	1.04 (0.83-1.30)	0.75
Secondary outcomes						
Composite cardiovascular events	139	10.9	127	8.8	1.23 (0.97-1.56)	0.09
Cardiovascular death	63	4.2	71	4.5	0.94 (0.67-1.32)	0.70
Nonfatal myocardial infarction	47	3.4	37	2.4	1.39 (0.91-2.15)	0.13
Nonfatal stroke	33	2.3	29	1.9	1.21 (0.73-2.00)	0.45
Hospitalization with new-onset angina	42	3.0	39	2.6	1.15 (0.75-1.78)	0.52
Transient ischemic attack	9	0.6	4	0.3	2.36 (0.73-7.68)	0.15
Composite infectious events	148	12.4	174	14.3	0.87 (0.70-1.08)	0.20
Death from infection	39	2.6	28	1.8	1.46 (0.90-2.38)	0.12
Hospitalization for infection	135	11.3	170	13.9	0.81 (0.65-1.02)	0.07
Complications of dialysis						
Need for access revision	145	13.2	147	12.4	1.08 (0.85-1.35)	0.54
Access-site infection	47	3.4	50	3.5	0.99 (0.67-1.48)	0.97
Serious fluid or electrolyte disorder	146	13.2	175	15.0	0.88 (0.71-1.10)	0.26
Placement of temporary dialysis catheter	118	10.0	124	9.7	1.03 (0.80-1.32)	0.85
Death as a result of treatment withdrawal	24	1.6	22	1.4	1.17 (0.66-2.08)	0.60
Death from cancer	14	0.9	16	1.0	0.92 (0.45-1.89)	0.82
Death from another cause	12	0.8	18	1.1	0.72 (0.35-1.49)	0.37

### Secondary outcome:

**No significant difference of adverse events**

(cardiovascular, infections, complications of dialysis)

# Is there evidence to guide us in the timing of dialysis initiation in children?



**1. Quality of Life (QoL)**

**2. Mortality**

**3. Morbidity**

- Infection & Inflammation
- Growth
- Anaemia
- Metabolic disease

**4. Economic considerations**



# Quality of Life (QoL)

1. Chronic dialysis in children is associated with **lower QoL scores than any other chronic condition apart from cancer!**
2. Depression
3. Loss of schooling, less well with schoolwork
4. Family breakdown, difficulties maintaining employment
5. Restricted lifestyle, worse adherence
6. Feeling of “being different”

Rees L, Assessment of dialysis adequacy: beyond urea kinetic measurements. *Pediatr Nephrol* 2019

Rees L et al, Chronic dialysis in children and adolescents: challenges and outcomes, *Lancet Child Adolesc Health* 2017

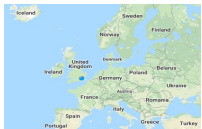
Clementi et al, Psychosocial considerations and recommendations for care of pediatric patients on dialysis. *Pediatr Nephrol* 2019

Neul et al, Health-related quality of life functioning over a 2-year period in children with end-stage renal disease. *Pediatr Nephrol* 2013

# Mortality



Okuda et al, Estimated GFR at dialysis initiation and mortality in children and adolescents. Am J Kidney Dis 2019



Preka et al, Association between timing of dialysis initiation and clinical outcomes in the paediatric population: An ESPN-ERA-EDTA Registry study. Nephrol Dial Transplant 2019



Winnicki et al, Higher eGFR at dialysis initiation is not associated with a survival benefit in children. J Am Soc Nephrol 2019

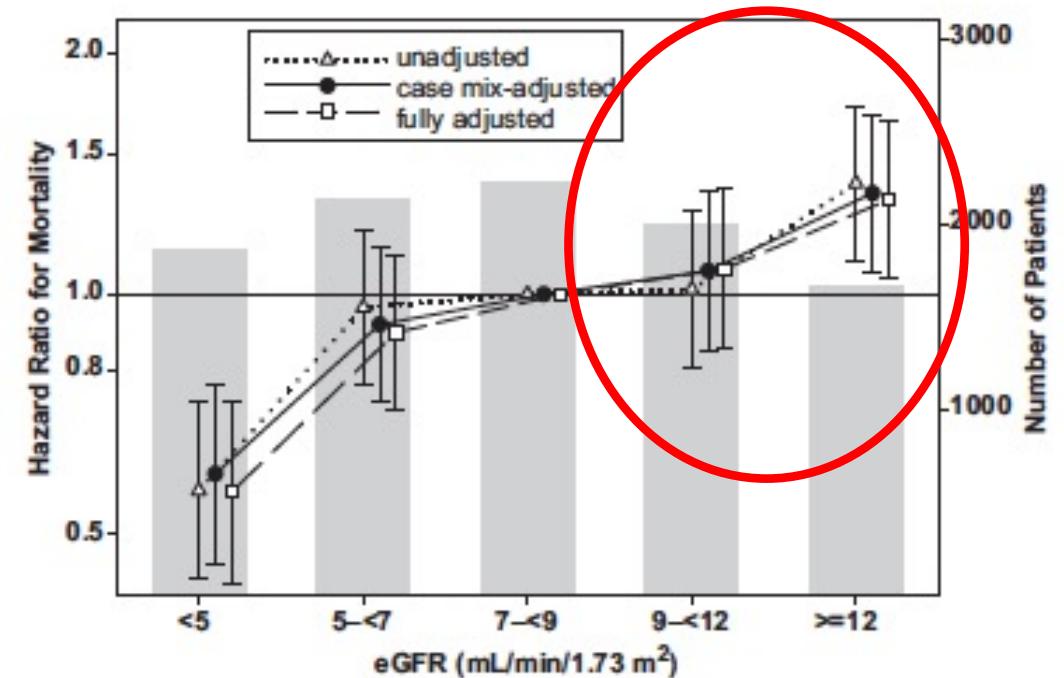


## US renal data system registry

Okuda et al, Am J Kidney Dis 2019

- **9,963** incident dialysis patients
- Age: **1-17 years old**
- **5 groups (eGFR) :**
  - **<5 (late starters)** HR 0.57 (95%CI 0.43-0.74)
  - 5-6.9
  - 7-8.9
  - 9-11.9
  - **> 12 (early starters)** HR 1.31 (95%CI 1.05-1.65)

**↑ Mortality risk across ↑ eGFRs**

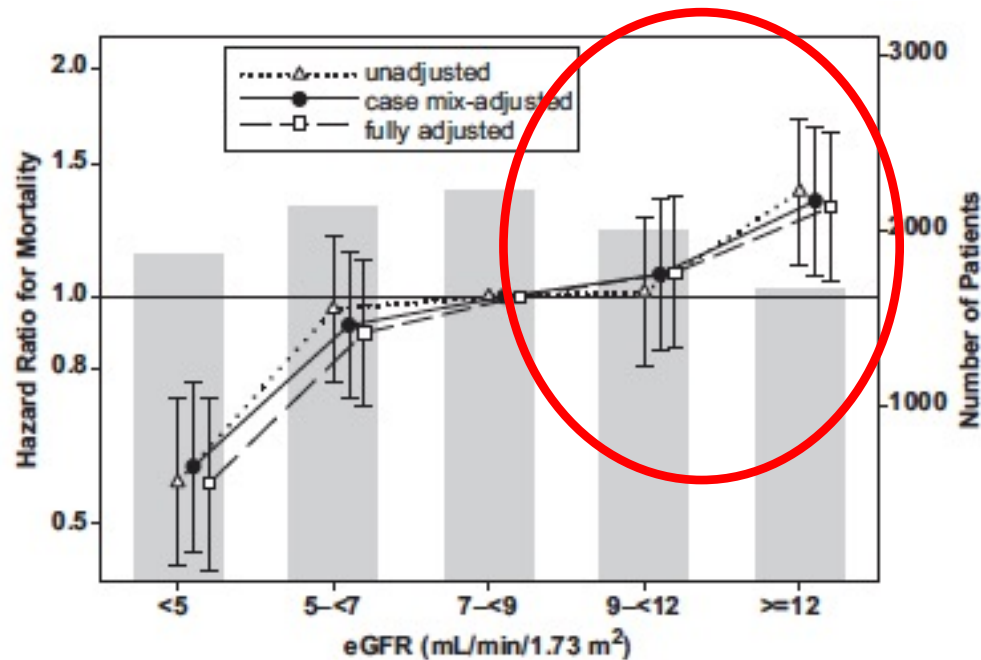


**Figure 3.** Hazard ratios for mortality across estimated glomerular filtration rates (eGFRs) at dialysis therapy initiation.

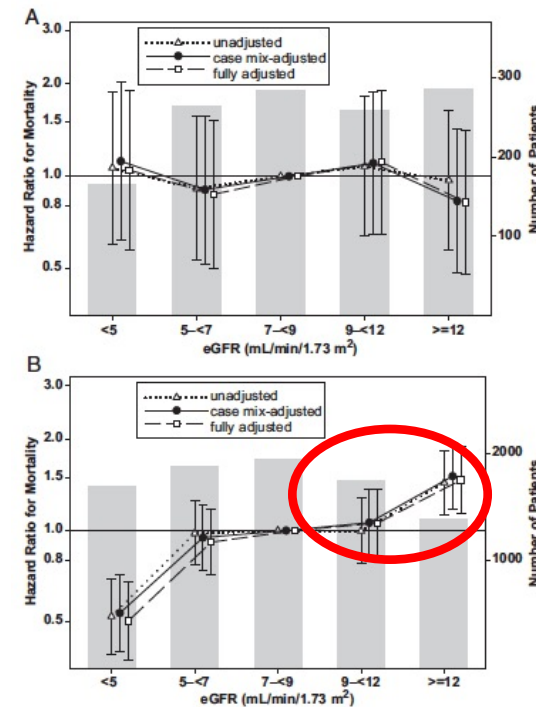


## US renal data system registry

## Okuda et al, Am J Kidney Dis 2019



**Figure 3.** Hazard ratios for mortality across estimated glomerular filtration rates (eGFRs) at dialysis therapy initiation.



**Figure 4.** Hazard ratios for mortality in patients (A) younger than 6 years and (B) 6 years or older. Abbreviation: eGFR, estimated glomerular filtration rate.

**Below 6 years old**

**Above 6 years old**



## US renal data system registry

Winnicki et al, JASN 2019

**Table 2.**

Adjusted hazards of death for the overall cohort and in analysis restricted to the year 2006–2015

Characteristics	Adjusted HR (95% CI)	P Value
Years 1995–2015		
All patients ( $n=14,696$ ) <sup>a</sup>	1.36 (1.24 to 1.50)	<0.001
Patients initiated on HD ( $n=8794$ )	1.56 (1.39 to 1.75)	<0.001
Patients initiated on PD ( $n=5902$ )	1.07 (0.91 to 1.25)	0.44
Years 2006–2015		
All patients ( $n=6757$ ) <sup>b</sup>	1.34 (1.11 to 1.62)	0.002
Patients initiated on HD ( $n=4151$ )	1.68 (1.33 to 2.12)	<0.001
Patients initiated on PD ( $n=2606$ )	0.86 (0.62 to 1.20)	0.37

<sup>a</sup>A total of 474 persons missing from adjusted analysis due to missing covariate data.

<sup>b</sup>A total of 217 persons missing from adjusted analysis due to missing covariate data.

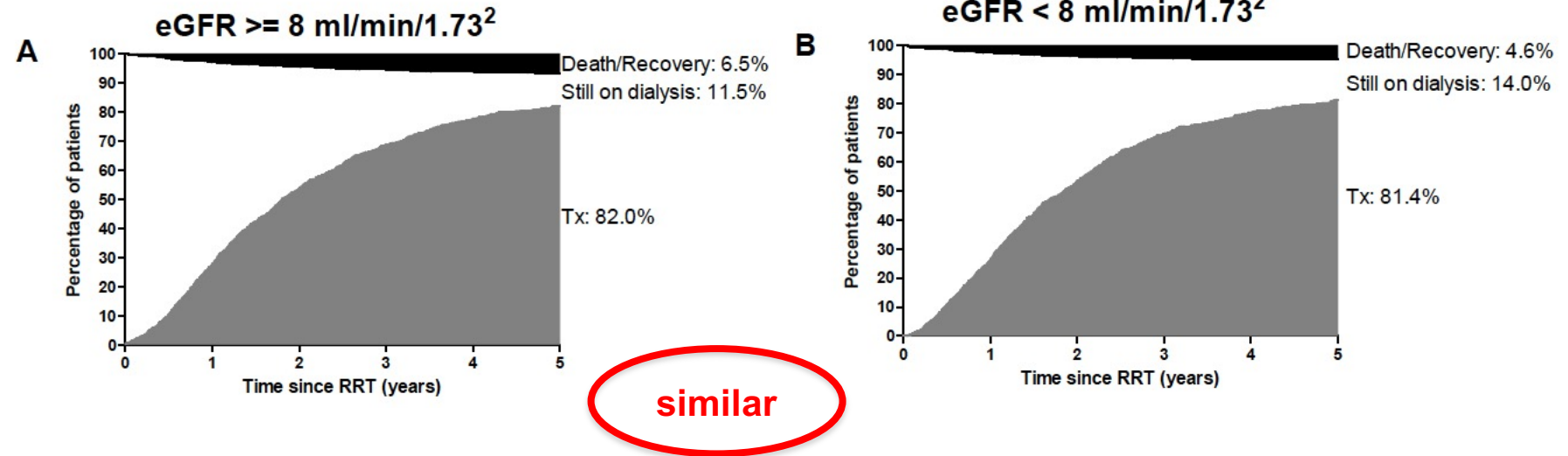
- **15,170** incident dialysis patients
- Age: **1 - 18 years old**
- **2 groups (eGFR) :**
  - $\leq 10$  ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> → late starters
  - $> 10$  ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> → early starters

**↑36% Mortality risk  
across ↑ eGFRs**

## ESPN/ERA registry data

## Preka et al, Nephrol Dial Transplant 2019

- **2,963** incident dialysis patients
- Age: **< 18 years old**
- **2 groups (eGFR) :**
  - **< 8 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> → late starters**
  - **≥ 8 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> → early starters**



**Mortality risk** : Late vs early initiation of dialysis:

- HR 1.00, 95% CI: 0.66-1.51
- aHR 0.82, 95% CI: 0.54-1.25



# Is there evidence to guide us in the timing of initiation of dialysis in children?



At what eGFR should we start dialysis?

1. Quality of Life (QoL)

2. Mortality

3. Morbidity

- Cardiovascular morbidity
- Growth
- Infection & Inflammation
- Anaemia
- Metabolic disease

4. Economic considerations

# Cardiovascular morbidity (HTN, LVH)

- IDEAL study (adults): no difference in LVEF, LVM, LVAV
- Children:

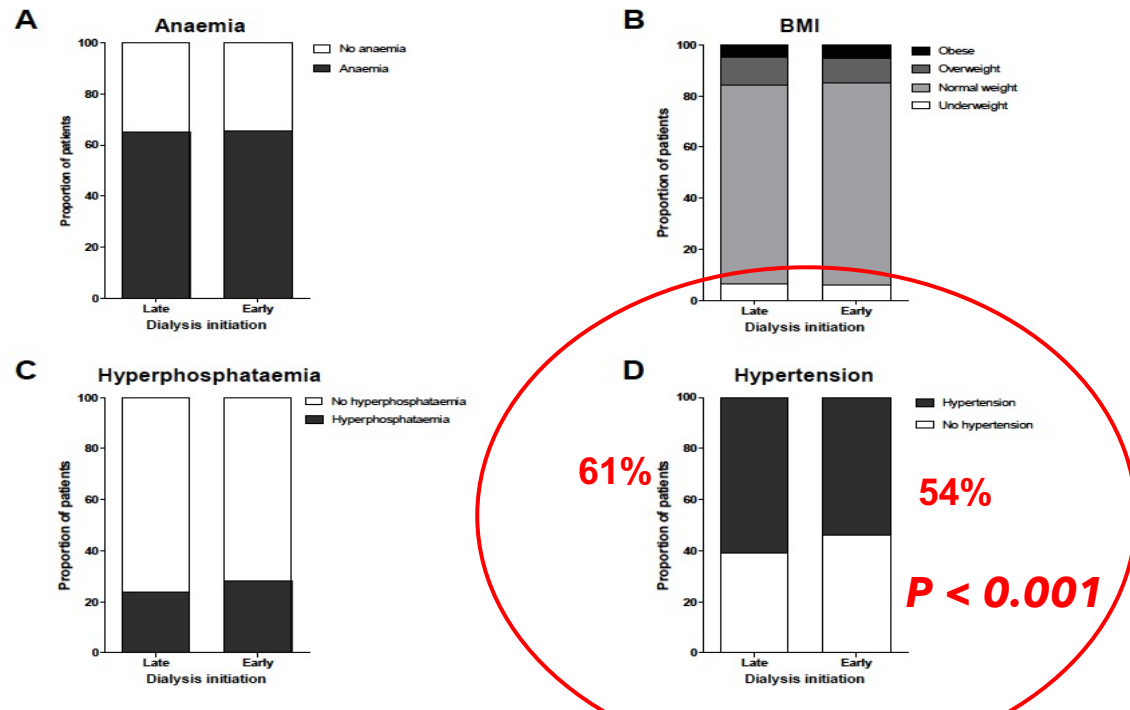
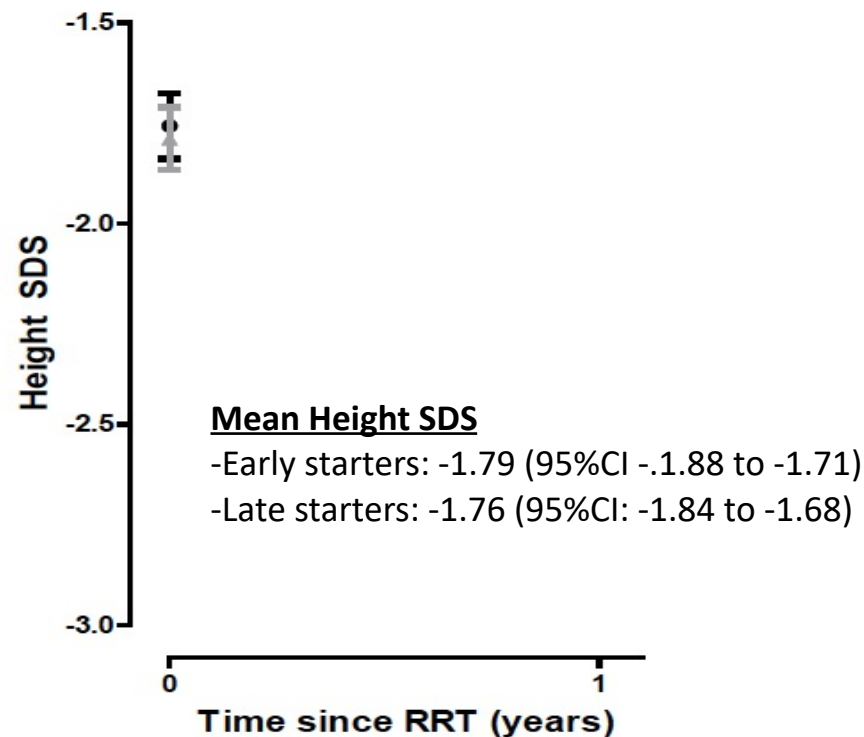


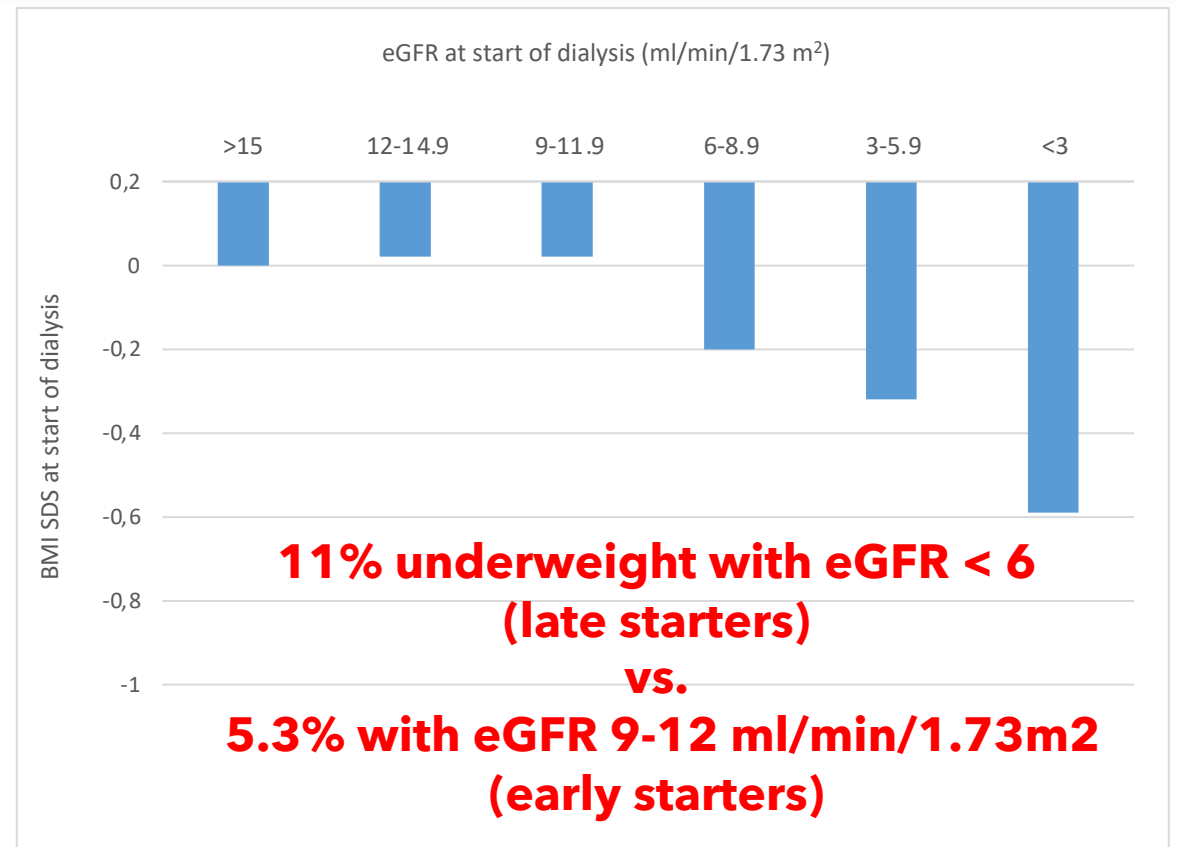
Figure 3. Prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors by eGFR category at dialysis initiation

	Early-starters ( $> 10$ ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup> )	Late-starters ( $< 7$ ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup> )	P value
LVMI (g/m <sup>2</sup> )	53 ± 28	60 ± 28	NS
LVH	51%	64%	NS
Number of deaths	5	6	NS
Frequency of hospitalizations (episodes/person-year)	1.8	2.0	NS
CRP (mg/l) (N=0-6)	3.64 ± 2.00	4.37 ± 3.28	NS
Hemoglobin (g/dL)	10.5 ± 2.1	10.3 ± 1.9	NS

# Growth (Height, BMI)



**Figure 2.** Modelled evolution of height standard deviations score (SDS) patients starting dialysis early (eGFR  $\geq 8$  ml/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup>) (grey triangles), and patients starting dialysis late (eGFR < 8 ml/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup>) (Black squares). Adjustments were made for age, sex, PRD, and treatment modality.



**Mean BMI SDS at first observation according to eGFR at initiation of CPD**

## Further comorbidities:

1. **Infection & Inflammation** (IDEAL study, ESPN/ERA registry data) – No difference
2. **Anaemia** [ESPN/ERA Registry data showed slightly higher prevalence among late starters (aOR 1.14, 95%CI 0.99-1.32)]
3. **Metabolic disease** (ESPN/ERA Registry data showed commoner hyperphosphatemia in early vs late starters (28% vs 24%))

## Further comorbidities:

## Economic considerations:

1. **Infection & Inflammation** (IDEAL study, ESPN/ERA registry data) - No difference
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3. **Metabolic disease** (ESPN/ERA Registry data showed commoner hyperphosphatemia in early vs late starters (28% vs 24%))

- **IDEAL study:** higher dialysis-related costs associated with early start, but similar costs related to resources (managing adverse events)
- **No data in children**

**Poll Question (2): After all conservative treatment efforts have been tried, there is some evidence that early initiation of dialysis in children might improve:**

- a) Hypertension
- b) Growth
- c) Metabolic Bone Disease
- d) Over-all-morbidity



## Equations to determine timing of dialysis initiation - (1)

### Kidney Failure Risk Equation (KFRE)

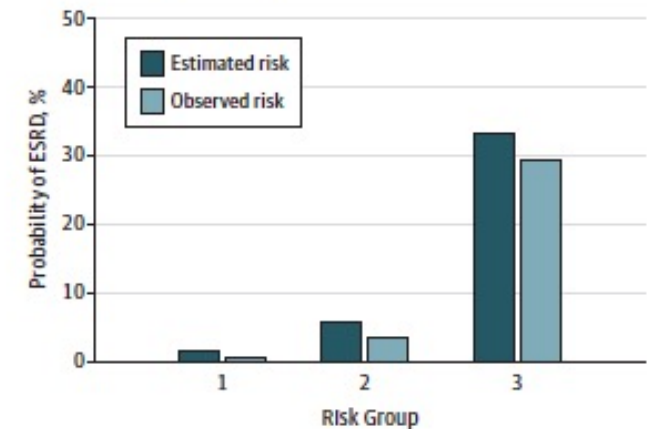
- 603 CKiD children (1-16 years old)
- Inclusion criteria:  $\text{eGFR} < 60 \text{ ml/min/1.73m}^2$
- Variables: 4- {age, sex, eGFR, ACR}  
8- {4 variables & Ca, Ph,  $\text{HCO}_3$ , pAlb}
- Outcome of interest: time to ESKD
- Conclusion: A useful tool for children with CKD 3 & 4 !

Table 2. C Statistics for the 4- and 8-Variable KFRE Applied to the CKiD Cohort

KFRE Risk	C Statistic (95% CI)
4-Variable	
1-y	0.90 (0.86-0.93)
2-y	0.86 (0.81-0.90)
5-y	0.81 (0.77-0.83)
8-Variable	
1-y	0.91 (0.87-0.94)
2-y	0.87 (0.82-0.91)
5-y	0.82 (0.78-0.85)

Abbreviations: CKiD, Chronic Kidney Disease in Children; KFRE, kidney failure risk equation.

Figure 2. Estimated vs Observed Probability of End-stage Renal Disease (ESRD) at 2 Years by Risk Group



# Equations to determine timing of dialysis initiation - (2)

## Estimating time to ESRD in CKD children

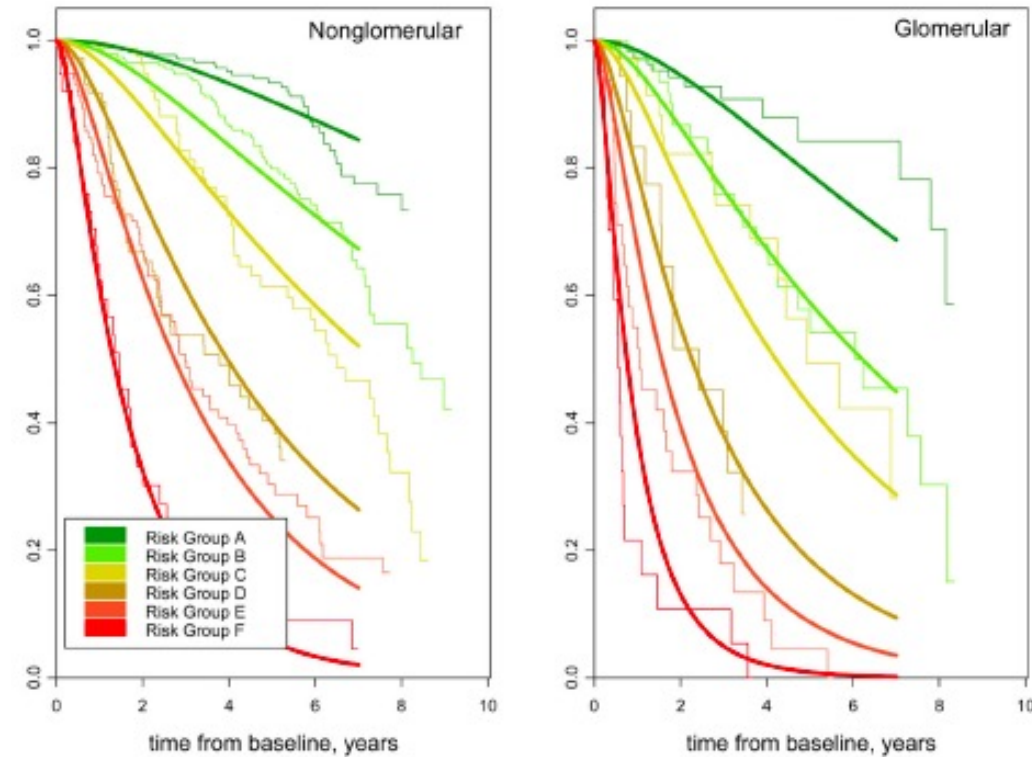
- 1169 children (1-18 years old) enrolled in the CKiD & ESCAPE Trial
- Inclusion criteria: eGFR > 15 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>
- Predictor: level of eGFR and PCR at study entry
- Outcome: Time to KRT, 50% reduction of eGFR or eGFR< 15 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>

			Baseline UPCR		
			<0.5	[0.5, 2.0]	>2.0
Baseline GFR Stage	I	≥90	n=44 CKiD: 100% ESCAPE: 0% glomerular dx: 48%  events=3 p-y=132.79 IR=2.3 (0.73, 7.00) per 100 p-y	n=12 CKiD: 100% ESCAPE: 0% glomerular dx: 67%  events=1 p-y=45.82	n=4 CKiD: 100% ESCAPE: 0% glomerular dx: 100%  events=1 p-y=11.40
	II	[60, 90)	n=200 CKiD: 95% ESCAPE: 5% glomerular dx: 29%  events=12 p-y=814.40 IR=1.5 (0.84, 2.6) per 100 p-y	n=48 CKiD: 94% ESCAPE: 6% glomerular dx: 58%  events=14 p-y=171.93 IR=8.1 (4.8, 13.8) per 100 p-y	n=17 CKiD: 100% ESCAPE: 0% glomerular dx: 88%  events=6 p-y=42.26 IR=14.2 (6.4, 31.6) per 100 p-y
	IIIa	[45, 60)	n=190 CKiD: 73% ESCAPE: 7% glomerular dx: 18%  events=34 p-y=956.79 IR=3.6 (2.5, 5.0) per 100 p-y	n=100 CKiD: 78% ESCAPE: 22% glomerular dx: 25%  events=30 p-y=469.27 IR=6.4 (4.5, 9.1) per 100 p-y	n=23 CKiD: 91% ESCAPE: 9% glomerular dx: 57%  events=15 p-y=65.91 IR=22.8 (13.7, 37.8) per 100 p-y
	IIIb	[30, 45)	n=153 CKiD: 54% ESCAPE: 46% glomerular dx: 8%  events=47 p-y=797.97 IR=5.9 (4.4, 7.8) per 100 p-y	n=101 CKiD: 75% ESCAPE: 25% glomerular dx: 21%  events=51 p-y=476.89 IR=10.7 (8.1, 14.1) per 100 p-y	n=52 CKiD: 69% ESCAPE: 31% glomerular dx: 46%  events=40 p-y=125.12 IR=32.0 (23.5, 43.6) per 100 p-y
	IV	[15-30)	n=69 CKiD: 48% ESCAPE: 52% glomerular dx: 7%  events=41 p-y=236.31 IR=17.4 (12.8, 23.6) per 100 p-y	n=97 CKiD: 46% ESCAPE: 54% glomerular dx: 8%  events=65 p-y=262.01 IR=24.8 (19.5, 31.6) per 100 p-y	n=59 CKiD: 59% ESCAPE: 41% glomerular dx: 36%  events=52 p-y=89.05 IR=58.4 (44.5, 76.6) per 100 p-y

## Equations to determine timing of dialysis initiation - (2)

### Estimating time to ESRD in CKD children

- 1169 children (1-18 years old) enrolled in the CKiD & ESCAPE Trial
- Inclusion criteria:  $\text{eGFR} > 15 \text{ ml/min/1.73m}^2$
- Predictor: level of eGFR and PCR at study entry
- Outcome: Time to KRT, 50% reduction of eGFR or  $\text{eGFR} < 15 \text{ ml/min/1.73m}^2$
- Conclusions:
  1. Combination of GFR, proteinuria, and CKD diagnosis is more informative for assessing the risk of disease progression in pediatric CKD patients than GFR alone.
  2. At any given risk stage, glomerular children were estimated to have a 43% shorter time to event than that of non-glomerular CKD children.



# Conclusions

## In adults:

Following the only RCT , there is **no clinical benefit of starting dialysis early** (IDEAL Study)

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## In children:

1. **Higher eGFRs at dialysis therapy initiation were associated with higher risk for mortality** (except in patients < 6 years old) (USRDS Registry)

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Following the only RCT , there is no clinical benefit of starting dialysis early (IDEAL Study)

## In children:

1. Higher eGFRs at dialysis therapy initiation were associated with higher risk for mortality (except in patients < 6 years old) (USRDS Registry)
2. **No association between timing of dialysis initiation and mortality or growth. HTN was more prevalent in late starters** → Special attention for prevention of CVD should be considered when opting for conservative treatment (ESPN/ERA Registry)



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## In adults:

Following the only RCT , there is no clinical benefit of starting dialysis early (IDEAL Study)

## In children:

1. Higher eGFRs at dialysis therapy initiation were associated with higher risk for mortality (except in patients < 6 years old) (USRDS Registry)
2. No association between timing of dialysis initiation and mortality or growth. HTN was more prevalent in late starters → Special attention for prevention of CVD should be considered when opting for conservative treatment (ESPN/ERA Registry)
3. **Starting dialysis might improve nutrition status** when exhausting all other options (IPPN Registry)



# Recommendations

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4. **Deferred initiation does not, however means deferred preparation**, and early discussions regarding medical and psychosocial preparation for the initiation of dialysis should not be delayed (→ placement of dialysis access, dialysis modality selection, advance care planning, assistance with home therapies). **Equations that predict time to ESKD could be a helpful tool.**

✓ International Committee of the Red Cross

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Mourad Mourad, aka the “doctor clown”, entertains children in the kidney dialysis ward in a local hospital in Gaza.

Photo: Omar Al-Qatta



**The optimal time for starting dialysis  
in children  
should be discussed case by case  
and is definitely NOT merely  
dependent on the level of  
eGFR/Creat level**

**Thank you for your attention !**

**Happy to take questions/comments @ [evgenia.preka@gmail.com](mailto:evgenia.preka@gmail.com)**