



Demystifying series - 3
Demystifying Kidney Failure

Healthy kidneys are constantly filtering our blood, helping remove wastes and extra water, which are excreted as urine.

Kidney (renal) failure implies that kidneys have stopped performing their normal function with disastrous and maybe even fatal consequences.

Kidney failure is of two types

1. Acute Kidney Failure - occurs in short time and is totally reversible if treated in time and appropriately
2. Chronic Kidney Failure - occurs over 5-15 years and is irreversible once sets in requiring either dialysis or renal transplant.

Acute renal failure is commonly caused by dehydration (acute gastroenteritis, dengue etc), loss of blood volume (major trauma or internal bleed), sepsis, cirrhosis of liver (hepatorenal syndrome) or some acute kidney infection.

Chronic renal failure commonly caused as target organ damage due to diabetes and hypertension (together responsible for over 75% of chronic renal failure). There is one form of chronic renal failure caused by injudicious use of pain killers (NSAID nephropathy)

End Stage Renal Disease - terminal stage of renal failure necessitating either maintenance (continuous) dialysis or renal transplant for survival.

It is crucial for treating doctors to identify acute renal failure in time and start appropriate treatment, whereas it is crucial for diabetics and hypertensives to ensure their ailments do not affect the kidneys for which they must undergo annual/ periodic checks for kidney function - as suggested by their doctors.

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