



71st SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY ON ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA

Statement delivered by Prof. Robyn Langham

Honorable chair, distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the International Society of Nephrology (ISN), we wish to thank the regional committee and its Member States for the actions taken on COVID-19 in the Western Pacific region.

The ISN urges the WHO Regional Committee and its Member States to recognize the impact of COVID-19 on patients with acute or permanent kidney failure, many of whom face interrupted access to, or even non-availability of, life-saving treatments such as dialysis and kidney transplantation. In these circumstances, unavailability of treatment will lead to severely increased mortality.

Preliminary data show that about 20-30% of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 develop kidney failure, leading to a surge in requirement for dialysis. The increased demand of limited resources severely compromises treatments of this acute, potentially reversible complication of COVID-19. Further, the breakdown of health systems and disruptions due to lockdowns have had a severe impact on the ability of patients with advanced kidney disease to access regular dialysis. Even a brief interruption in chronic dialysis treatment may represent a death sentence for the patient. For patients with a kidney transplant who are not able to access essential immunosuppressive medications, there will be at extreme risk of transplant rejection and even death.

Hence, we call upon Member States of the WHO Western Pacific Region to:

- Ensure a timely treatment of acute and chronic kidney disease including access to essential medications, dialysis equipment and supplies, and safe transplantation.
- Ensure availability of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the healthcare workers by overseeing their purchase, distribution, supply, and responsible use, and ensure rapid scaling-up of SARS-CoV2 testing capabilities.
- Ensure that patients with NCDs, who by being affected by severe co-morbidities including diabetes, malignancies and respiratory, cardiovascular, liver, and kidney diseases commonly experience worse outcomes, are protected from and treated promptly for the consequences of COVID-19 disease.
- Support collaborative research and collection, and widely share the results of all the actions taken, in order to generate guidelines and recommendations relevant to each national healthcare capacity.