Kidney Disease: From advanced disease to bereavement
Second Edition

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Kidney Disease: From advanced disease to bereavement is the second edition following on from End of Life Care in Nephrology: From advanced disease to bereavement, published in 2007. This book works hand in hand with another publication Supportive Care for the Renal Patient by Chambers, Brown and Germain, which has been reviewed previously in this journal. Edwina Brown is a Consultant Nephrologist, Hammersmith Hospital, London and Honorary Professor of Renal Medicine, Imperial College London. Fliss Murtagh is a Consultant and Clinical Senior Lecturer in Palliative Care, Kings College London. Emma Murphy is a BRC Clinical Research Training Fellow, Kings College London. All three authors have been major contributors to evidence-based literature in recent years on the topics of symptom management and end-of-life care for renal patients.

This pocketbook is a guide for renal and palliative care doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who manage the care of renal patients approaching the end of life or suffering with difficult-to-control symptoms. This book promotes shared decision making as a fundamental part of planning a patient’s future care to ensure the best choices are made while acknowledging the complexities of advanced kidney disease. Focus is on the person and not the kidney, assisting patients to achieve personal health goals, improving functional status, avoid preventable admissions and promoting positive health care experiences. The book briefly describes end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) and brief epidemiological data on renal replacement therapy in the United Kingdom, common comorbid conditions and complications of ESKD as a background to the palliative care requirements of renal patients before moving onto the fundamentals of providing holistic palliative support to the renal patient and their families.

Chapters include brief discussions and dot points on the topics of ESKD, comorbidity, complications of ESKD, health-related quality of life, symptom assessment and trajectories, the management of pain, non-pain symptoms in ESKD, how to deliver the best supportive care and palliative care, recognising dying, communicating with patients and families, ethical and legal considerations, management of the last few days, spiritual and religious care, caring for carers, drug doses in advanced chronic kidney disease and audit and research in renal end-of-life care. Importantly, as this book only gives basic information and practical advice, included are guides to further reading. Changes from the first edition include two additional chapters: Symptom Assessment and Trajectories and Audit and Research in Renal End of Life Care as well as enhanced information within the existing chapters.

The authors state the second edition has updated guidelines that conform to recent changes in practice and are the result of knowledge gained through research. As explained in the previous review of the first edition, the context of this book is based on the United Kingdom experience and research, much of which can be transposed to the Australian and New Zealand renal populations, the important limitation being the lack of indigenous guidelines. Care would also need to be placed on ethical and legal aspects to ensure compliance with local laws and cultural differences.

Management of pain includes how to assess pain and refers to the WHO analgesic ladder, which is used in standard pain management and palliative care settings. Care would need to be placed on the medications and conversion table detailed in the book to ensure the locally used medications and conversion tables are referred to.

This book is a valuable updated addition to the series for both palliative and non-palliative care professionals to guide them in the care of the renal patient who is approaching end of life both as a learning tool and as a hands-on guide for quick reference.