

2019 AbSPORU Studentship Award Recipients (11)

Christy Chong - University of Calgary

Project: *Understanding the perceptions of acute care service avoidability among patients with chronic kidney disease*



Biography

Christy is currently a first year Master's student in the Department of Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary where she obtained her Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences.

Her passion to improve patient outcomes for individual with kidney disease stems from her personal experience being a caregiver to her father, a recent kidney transplant recipient. During her undergraduate studies, she worked on a number of projects within the Nephrology Research Group.

This included examining trends in key quality of care indicators for patients with kidney failure, mobile application use for self-management in chronic kidney disease, and knowledge translation strategies for the dissemination of a clinical kidney pathway tool. Additionally, she worked with clinicians at the Alberta Children's Hospital to determine the optimal hemodialysis prescription for children with a rare metabolic condition and was involved in recruitment and surveying patients with kidney disease at the University of Alberta.

In her spare time, she loves learning about plants, baking pies and volunteering at the Rotary Flames House (a pediatric hospice) and the Kidney March. Christy is now translating her previous research, volunteer, and personal experiences towards her Master's degree. From her thesis, she aims to understand the perceptions of acute care avoidability among patients with kidney disease.

Project Summary

The number of individuals with chronic kidney disease (CKD) is increasing in Canada. Research has shown that patients with CKD are often heavy users of acute care services, such as the emergency department. Prior studies have found that patients often accessed

acute care services because they lacked home support, were physically and/or emotionally burdened by treatment, or valued the comfort received from medical professionals.

Having a strong, continuous relationship with a primary care provider has been found to be associated with greater quality of care, patient satisfaction, and overall health among patients with chronic disease. Understanding patient perceptions of potentially avoidable acute care use and how it is related to patient-provider relationships is an essential step in reducing unnecessary acute care use among patients with CKD.

Patients across Canada who have CKD have voiced the need for researchers to find ways to improve patient experience and health outcomes. Further, there is a need for acute care use avoidance strategies. Christy's project aims to champion these patient priorities by understanding the reasons that lead patients to access acute care services. It will explore these experiences to gain a broader understanding of why patients seek emergency care, whether continuity of primary care influences acute care use, and the extent to which this care was perceived as avoidable from the patient perspective. These findings will be used to create a foundation of knowledge that can reduce acute care use for potentially avoidable reasons, inform future interventions and improve patient outcomes and quality of life.