AbSPORU
Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit

Suet Hang Lo - University of Alberta

Project: How, why, for whom, and under what circumstances does mental healthcare work for people receiving dialysis and experiencing anxiety symptoms?

Background:

Anxiety symptoms are common among people living with kidney failure and receiving dialysis, yet the problem remains under-addressed. Untreated anxiety symptoms are associated with negative consequences, including increased hospitalization and poor quality of life; however, people receiving dialysis have expressed that their mental health needs are not supported in the care being provided. Mental healthcare is complex for people receiving dialysis who are also experiencing anxiety symptoms. In the healthcare system, patients and clinicians may encounter barriers to receiving and providing mental health care respectively. How does mental healthcare work to address their anxiety symptoms? Why does it help some, but not all people? Who benefits the most? Why does it work better in some conditions? We need to answer these questions in order to provide equitable and person-centred care for people receiving dialysis.

My project aims to explain how, why, for whom, and under what circumstances mental healthcare works for people receiving dialysis and experiencing anxiety symptoms. I will conduct literature syntheses and interviews to understand how contextual features experienced by people shape their responses to care and influence the mechanisms through which mental healthcare works. I will also explore the diverse backgrounds, health and life experiences of people receiving dialysis to understand their anxiety symptoms trajectories. Throughout the research process, I will collaborate with the well-established Community Advisory Committee (people who have lived experiences of receiving dialysis or caregivers)

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to work towards addressing the problem. Contextually nuanced theories will be developed through this project. The findings will provide a theoretical framework to guide the future provision of mental healthcare for people receiving dialysis and address a major gap they have identified.

BIO:

Suet Hang Lo (Lori; she/her) is a Registered Nurse with a clinical background in kidney health and dialysis. She also taught in the undergraduate nursing program at the Hong Kong Metropolitan University. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Master of Science in Clinical Gerontology from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is currently a doctoral student in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta. Her doctoral work focuses on understanding an underexplored area: mental healthcare for people receiving dialysis and experiencing anxiety symptoms. Her research interests include kidney care, mental health of people receiving dialysis, and quality of life research. Through her research, she hopes to contribute to person-centred care for people receiving dialysis and experiencing anxiety symptoms, ultimately improving their quality of life.