

# Dialysis patients : vulnerable group of patients

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## Dialysis patients: vulnerable group of patients

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**To the Editor:** We have read the article by Anderson *et al.*<sup>1</sup> as well as the editorial by Abdel-Kader and Lynn Unruh<sup>2</sup> with great interest and would like to comment.

It is clear from the article by Anderson *et al.* and the editorial that dialysis patients belong to an extremely vulnerable group and that they should get very special attention and care in case of natural disasters.

Our world is not perfect and even today there are wars throughout our planet. These situations are especially threatening for dialysis patients and those with renal transplants.

Unfortunately, Croatian nephrologists had this kind of experience 18 years ago.<sup>3</sup>

There were 31 dialysis units in Croatia in 27 cities providing care for 1819 patients during 1991. When the war started, eight dialysis units with 402 patients had to be evacuated; among them two centers were completely destroyed. Most patients were evacuated without any medical records and a majority of them arrived in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. As the war escalated, some of the patients were transferred to smaller towns, far from the frontline. In spite of many problems, all patients were treated properly and most of them did not miss the dialysis sessions. This was achieved thanks to the immense efforts of the medical staff and humanitarian aid from all over the world.

Dialysis patients are definitely a very vulnerable and imperiled group, and it is necessary to plan how to take

care of them in special circumstances, not just during natural disasters but also in case of unfortunate and tragic wars.

1. Anderson AH, Cohen AJ, Kutner NG *et al.* Missed dialysis sessions and hospitalization in hemodialysis patients after Hurricane Katarina. *Kidney Int* 2009; **75**: 1202–1208.
2. Abdel-Kader K, Lynn Unruh M. Disaster and end-stage renal disease: targeting vulnerable patients for improved outcomes. *Kidney Int* 2009; **75**: 1131–1133.
3. Pavlovic D, Kes P, Jankovic N *et al.* Treating patients in war-torn Croatia. *Nephrol News Issue* 1994; **2**: 14.

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## HIV-1 entry into human podocytes is mediated through lipid rafts

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**To the Editor:** We read with the interest the article by Khan *et al.*<sup>1</sup> Lipid rafts have been reported to have an important role for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-1 entry into several cells.<sup>2,3</sup> Renal biopsy studies have demonstrated that HIV-1 infection of renal epithelial cells contribute to the pathogenesis of HIV-1-associated nephropathy.<sup>4,5</sup> As renal epithelial cells do not express classical HIV-1 receptors, their entry into podocytes remains a mystery.<sup>6</sup> We studied the role

