The Journey From Illness to Wellness: An Exploration of Sociocultural Issues After Renal Transplantation in Pakistan

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The qualitative study aimed to explore the role of sociocultural factors in influencing the process of adjustment, coping and living as a transplant recipient and the transitions in their personality and life orientation after experiencing renal transplant. For this purpose, Renal Transplant Recipients (RTRs) were interviewed individually about their experience and journey of losing and gaining a native organ (kidney). Seventeen recipients (7 females & 10 males) out of twenty, completed the interviews at the renal clinics in Lahore (belonging to different cities of Pakistan). Most recipients described sociocultural issues in terms of financial issues of affordability and society’s non acceptance of a transplant recipient in employment and compatibility for a normal married life. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcripts. The narratives revealed that the major themes included 1) Self-Identity, Social Acceptance and Desirability; 2) Religious Orientation, Beliefs and Faith; 3) Marital, Sexual and Familial Life, however, there were interesting patterns of Sociodemographic differences in these sociocultural aspects. Interestingly, marital life was one of the most significant domain that differed among both genders. Female recipients either got divorced or separated in this journey of illness to wellness, on the contrary, male recipients remained stable in their marital status and their spouses did not leave them in critical times. This is a major sociocultural dilemma of a Pakistani society that has financial, psychological and even health consequences.

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