

Drug coverage improves care for GN patients

The BC Renal Agency has taken the initiative to cover immunosuppressant (anti-rejection) medication costs for the treatment of patients with glomerulonephritis (GN), a relatively rare group of diseases that can result in kidney failure. In BC, about 267 patients are diagnosed with GN every year.

GN disproportionately affects younger Canadians. This is one reason GN accounts for up to 33% of all new kidney transplants in Canada, more than any other disease.

For kidney transplant patients, the cost of immunosuppressant drugs is covered by BC Transplant. However, patients with GN who required the same immunosuppressant drugs to prevent kidney failure were previously subject to out of pocket expenses. A 2013 survey found that 98% of BC nephrologists believed that better immunosuppressant drug funding would improve care for these patients.

To address this discrepancy and to ensure GN patients in the province receive the treatment they require, the BC Renal Agency has enabled access to these immunosuppressant drugs required for GN patients, with the launch of its GN formulary on April 15. The formulary is expected to greatly enhance the care of GN patients in BC.

From a provincial health system perspective, this improved access to GN medication by the agency makes good economic sense. If patients get optimal treatment for their disease, this may help to prevent kidney failure and the need for kidney replacement therapy, as well as prevent complications associated with progressive kidney disease.

In addition to improving patient access to the medications required for treating GN, the Renal Agency is also working to improve prescribing practice for these conditions by developing treatment protocols.

You can learn more about the GN registry and formulary, as well as access GN clinical tools and medication information sheets, on the BC Renal Agency [website](#).
