

A SINGLE-CENTER STUDY EVALUATING THE PREVALENCE, RISK FACTORS, AND CONSEQUENCES OF ACUTE KIDNEY INJURY IN THE INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

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ABSTRACT

Background: Acute kidney injury (AKI) is a significant complication in critically ill patients in intensive care units (ICUs), impacting morbidity, mortality, and overall patient outcomes. **Objectives:** To assess the frequency, risk factors, and implications of AKI among individuals admitted to the medical ICU at Bahria International Hospital between 2021 and 2022. **Study Design:** This study utilized a retrospective design. **Setting:** The study was conducted at Bahria International Hospital's medical ICU. **Duration of Study:** Data were collected between September 2022 and September 2023. **Material and Methods:** AKI frequency and risk factors were assessed using the Acute Kidney Injury Network (AKIN) criteria for staging. Risk factors such as age, hypertension, ACEI/ARB usage, and severity of underlying illnesses (measured by APACHE II scores) were analyzed. Multivariate analysis was performed to identify independent predictors of AKI occurrence. **Results:** The study found that 32.7% of ICU patients experienced AKI, primarily categorized as stage 1 AKI (60.12%). Advanced age, hypertension, ACEI/ARB usage, and higher APACHE II scores were significant risk factors for AKI development. Multivariate analysis identified age (HR 1.3, 95% CI 1.2-1.5, P = 0.01) and APACHE II score (HR 1.6, 95% CI 1.3-1.8, P = 0.02) as independent predictors of AKI occurrence. **Conclusion:** The incidence of AKI among ICU patients is substantial and associated with increased mortality and morbidity. Early identification and management of modifiable risk factors are crucial for mitigating AKI-related complications and improving patient outcomes. Proactive measures in critical care settings are necessary to reduce AKI burden and enhance patient care.

Keywords: Acute Kidney Injury, Critical Illness, Intensive Care Units, Mortality, Risk Factors

INTRODUCTION

Acute kidney injury (AKI) is a common complication among critically sick patients in the intensive care unit (ICU), leading to higher mortality, morbidity, and duration of stay (1). Early detection and care of acute kidney injury (AKI) is crucial to reduce the likelihood of death, hospital stay, and chronic kidney disease (CKD), as the prevalence ranges from 2.5% to 92% (2-7). AKI is expected in the ICU because of several illnesses that impair organ self-regulation. The extent of dysfunction caused by AKI varies based on the original disease's genesis and severity, making treatment challenging. With this understanding, the application of treatment resources establishes clinical stability and prevents other challenges (5).

There is no standardized description of AKI in ICU settings. Several studies have utilized several categories to identify AKI in ICU patients, such as RIFLE (risk, injury, failure, loss, and end-stage renal failure), AKIN (acute kidney injury network), KDIGO (kidney disease improving global outcomes), and CK (creatinine kinetics) (8-12). There is less research on the prevalence of acute kidney injury (AKI) among patients in ICUs in Pakistan.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the prevalence, risk factors, and outcomes of acute kidney injury (AKI) in medical ICU patients in Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

Data were gathered from patients hospitalized in the medical ICU of Bahria International Hospital in Lahore using a retrospective research methodology. Every patient hospitalized in a medical ICU during

September 2022 and September 2023 had their medical records examined. In cases when the patient had many admissions, analysis was done on the initial admission. From patient files, demographic information was taken out, such as gender, years of age, concurrent medical conditions, reason for admission, drugs, laboratory findings, and duration of ICU stay. To characterize and stage AKI, we employed the categorization system (AKIN) (13, 14).

AKIN is an amended version of the previous RIFLE classification for AKI, which calls for 48 hours, during which there must be a minimum 26.4 μmol/l rise in serum creatinine or a reduction in urine output. AKI is considered, per AKIN, following the achievement of appropriate hydration and the exclusion of urinary blockage. The glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) was estimated using the Modification of Diet in Renal Disease (MDRD) equation. Intravenous contrast injection within one week of the beginning of AKI was regarded as contrast exposure.

The hospital's institutional review board gave the study approval without any restriction.

The data analysis was done with SPSS version 21. Patients were split into two groups: those who had AKI and those who did not. We utilized the unpaired t-test to compare differences among naturally distributed data and the mean and standard deviation (±SD) for continuous variables. For categorical variables, percentages were employed. In cases where the data were not normally distributed, the nonparametric categories were compared using the Mann-Whitney U-test. The categorical variables were tested using the Pearson chi-square test. The independent predictors of AKI were identified using univariate and multivariate regression analyses (depending on essential variables in the univariate analysis along those factors

considered clinically significant by consultant nephrologists, like age, gender, comorbidities, APACHE II score, and serum albumin).

RESULTS

After 210 patients' records were examined, 70 were not included: 18 patients had end-stage renal disease and were receiving chronic hemodialysis, and 52 patients due to missing data. The study population was divided into the AKI group and the non-AKI group. Using the mean of the first three successive measurements, the mean arterial pressure (MAP) among the AKI cohort was 81.2 mmHg upon admission, while the non-AKI group's MAP was 78.2 mmHg (P = 0.08). At admission, the average eGFR was 90.3 ml/min (SD ± 72.1); the AKI groups was 71.2 ml/min (SD ± 61.6), while the non-AKI groups were 99.1 ml/min (SD ± 75.1) (P < 0.001). other details of [patient demographics are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Patient demographics details

Variable	(N) % N=140
Gender	
Male	80 (57%)
Female	60 (43%)
Comorbidities	
Diabetes	65(46%)
Hypertension	72(51%)
Ischemic heart disease	22(15%)
Peripheral vascular disease	6(4%)
Cerebrovascular accident	16(11%)
Cancer	14(10)
Drugs	
Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors/ Angiotensin II receptor blockers	57(41%)
Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs	17(12%)
Contrast	27(19%)
APACHE II score, mean (±SD)	12.2 ±4.12
Mortality	
At the time of discharge	82(58%)
30 days after discharge	4(2.8%)

Neurological conditions accounted for the majority of admissions (24.2%), followed by respiratory conditions (22.1%) (Table 2). While sepsis (30.14%) was the most frequent cause of AKI, neurological diseases (19.8%) came in second. AKI was found in 32.7% of cases, with stage 1 AKI accounting for 60.12% of cases (Figure 1). Of the patients who experienced AKI, 21.8% began hemodialysis for various reasons: Dialysis was initiated for three reasons: 16.2% for long-lasting hyperkalemia, 47.7% for fluid overload that did not respond to diuretic medications, and 36.8% for a combination of the two. At the point of discharge, the non-AKI group had a mean eGFR of 128.2 ml/min (SD ± 186.8), while the AKI group had a mean of 62.2 ml/min (SD ± 84.7) (P < 0.001) while mean eGFR was 105.6 ml/min (SD ± 163.1).

Univariate data analysis revealed that AKI was predicted by increasing age (P = 0.002), hypertension (P = 0.003), use of ACEI/ARBs (P = 0.004), and APACHE II score (13.1 ±3.9 for AKI vs. 9.8 ± 4.4 for non-AKI) p =0.01 (Table 3). In the multivariate

analysis, age (HR 1.3, 95% CI 1.2-1.5, P = 0.01) and APACHE II score (HR 1.6, 95% CI 1.3-1.8, P = 0.02) were significant predictors of AKI. The mean duration of the ICU stay was 12.7 days, with 10.5 days among the AKI group and 11.4 days among the non-AKI group (P = 0.08). The investigation failed to gather data on the time frame between ICU admission and AKI incidence due to insufficient or inaccurate data. The AKI group had a mortality rate of 60.9%, compared to 39.1% in the non-AKI group (P = 0.02). At 30 days following discharge, the AKI group had a 75% death rate compared to the non-AKI group's 25% (P = 0.04). Patients with severe AKI (stage 3) reported a greater death rate (89%) than those with stage 2 (74.9%) or stage 1 (60.1%) (P = 0.03).

Table 2: Principal reasons for admission

Variable	(N) % N=140
Respiratory	31(22.1%)
Respiratory failure	7(5)
Severe pneumonia	17(12)
Pulmonary embolism	4(2.8)
Bronchial asthma	3(2.14)
Cardiology	17(12.1%)
Acute coronary syndrome	8(5.7)
Arrhythmia	5(3.5)
Cardiac arrest	2(1.4)
Hypertensive emergency	2(1.4)
Neurology	34(24.2)
Hemorrhagic stroke	15(10.7)
Ischemic stroke	12(8.5)
Seizure	7(5)
Gastrointestinal	18(12.8)
Liver cirrhosis	6(4.2)
Upper gastrointestinal bleeding	9(6.4)
Abdominal pain	3(2.1)
Endocrinology	13(9.2)
Diabetic ketoacidosis	12(8.5)
Hypoglycemia	1(0.7)
Sepsis	19(13.5)
Electrolyte disorders	13(9.2)
Malignancy	14(10)

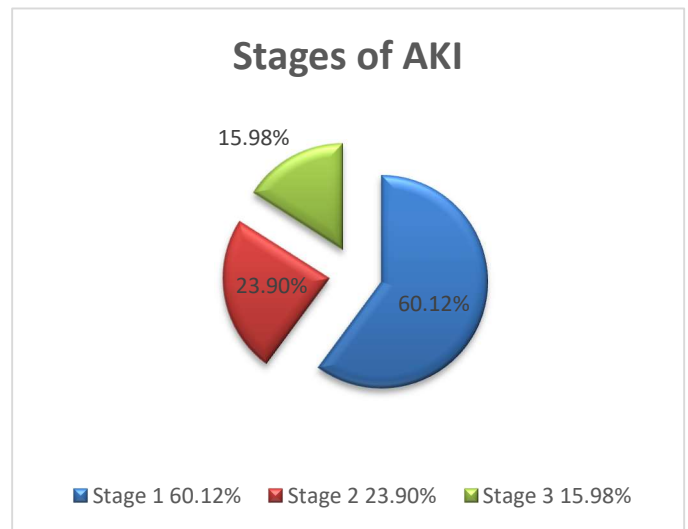


Figure 1: Stages of AKI in the study population

Table 3: Comparison between both groups

Variable	AKI group N= 70 (%)	Non-AKI group N=70 (%)	P value
Age (Years), mean (\pm SD)	61.4 \pm 19.2	52.9 \pm 22.1	0.0002
Age Groups (Years)			
<60	20(28.5)	30(43.8)	0.06
60–69	34(48.5)	32(45.7)	
>70	16(22.8)	8(11.4)	
Sex			
Male	42(60)	38(54.3)	0.25
Female	28(40)	32(45.7)	
Comorbidities			
Diabetes mellitus	24(36.9)	41(63.1)	0.16
Hypertension	30(41.6)	42(58.4)	0.003
Ischemic heart disease	7(31.8)	15(0)	0.08
Cerebrovascular accident	6(37.5)	10(62.5)	0.14
Cancer	5(35.7)	9(64.3)	0.04
Peripheral vascular disease	2(33.3)	4(66.6)	0.59
Drugs			
Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors/Angiotensin II receptor blockers	21(36.8)	36(63.2)	0.004
Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs	5(29.4)	12(70.6)	0.21
Contrast	9(33.3)	18(66.6)	0.07
APACHE II	13.1 (\pm SD3.9)	9.8 (\pm SD 4.4)	0.01
Mortality			
At the time of discharge	50(60.9)	32(39.1)	0.02
30 days after discharge	43(75)	1(25)	0.04

DISCUSSION

AKI is a global issue that requires significant resources and varies between prosperous and low-income nations(15). Early identification and treatment are crucial for reducing mortality, morbidity, CKD, and lengthy hospital stays, particularly in critically ill and ICU patients. This research is the first to examine the prevalence and risk factors causing AKI across ICU patients in Pakistan.

In our ICU patients, the incidence of AKI was 32.7%. Risk factors for developing AKI were advancing age, high blood pressure, usage of ACEI/ARBs, and severe critical illness (higher APACHE II score).AKI incidences among ICU patients range from 2% to 92%(3). This variation can be due to the use of various classifications (RIFLE, AKIN, KDIGO, and CK) among studies (3, 16, 17), including or excluding urine output parameters (18-21). Some studies show that using AKIN criteria for evaluating the incidence of AKI is more accurate, but RIFLE parameters may be more effective in predicting mortality (16, 22).

Our cohort had a 32.7% incidence of AKI, which can be attributed to a broader range of ICU patients, including those with coronary artery disease and neurological conditions, excluding urine output parameters (21, 23). Sepsis was the leading cause of AKI, with 30.1% of patients with septicemia developing AKI. Studies on septic patients have shown a greater prevalence of AKI and death (24-30).

Research from Iran (a nearby nation) found a 37% prevalence of AKI utilizing RIFLE criteria. The study did not specify the reason for admission to the ICU. However, it is possible that their cohort contained more septic patients, given that the rate of AKI was similar to ours (Kebar et al., 2018). An analysis of 300 ICUs globally found that the frequency of AKI was 33.4% in wealthy nations and 37.7% in underdeveloped nations (3).

Our study found that 60.12% of individuals with AKI fell into stage 1 of the AKIN criteria. This is in line with previous research whereby the vast majority of individuals with AKI were in stage 1. In a Chinese dataset of 3107 individuals suffering from AKI, 23.1% were in stage 1 (4). Zhang et al. found that 41.2% of AKI patients in the UK ICU

were in stage 1 (31). Compared to our sample, patients with AKI had significantly lower eGFR levels at admission and discharge. Patients with past AKI may have an increased risk of developing CKD, particularly when the stage and degree of AKI rise (7). Severe AKI increases the chance of developing CKD following hospital discharge. Regardless of less severe cases, the risk of CKD remains apparent and requires longer follow-up (7). Compared to other research, the 30-day mortality rate ranged between 22% and 52% [2, 38]. Our analysis split fatality rates by time of discharge. Patients with AKI had a greater mortality rate regardless of discharge time, with most deaths occurring during hospitalization.

Previous research on AKI in the elderly has shown that patients over 60 had a higher risk of AKI, morbidity, mortality, more extended hospital stays, and requirement for RRT (32). Santos et al. conducted an overview of AKI in ICUs, using data from 67,033 patients from over 300 ICUs worldwide. The study found that mortality rates in septic patients ranged from 5% – 80% (highest), with RRT rates ranging from 0.8% to 59.2% (3). In ICUs with less septic individuals, there is less total morbidity and mortality in AKI patients. This suggests that sepsis possesses a significant role in the higher death rate of AKI patients, emphasizing the importance of early identification and treatment. Our study found that the AKI group had a shorter hospital stay, which can be attributed to higher in-hospital mortality (60.9%) and faster recovery times for patients with acute cardiac diseases.

Our study had many limitations. Our retrospective analysis was conducted at a single center and included fewer sepsis patients than prior studies. The small sample size of the study population should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. Prospective and multicenter investigations are required to examine demographic disparities at the national level and determine their impact on the risk of developing AKI in the area we serve.

CONCLUSION

The frequency of AKI among our ICU patients was 32.7%. Getting Older, high blood pressure, ACEI/ARB use, and significant critical

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illness (higher APACHE II scores) were all risk factors associated with AKI. Acute kidney injury (AKI) in the ICU leads to more extended stays and higher morbidity and fatality rates. Early detection of acute kidney injury (AKI) and treatment-modifiable risk factors might prevent negative outcomes and adverse effects, reducing mortality as well as morbidity in ICU patients. To enhance ICU care, reduce mortality and morbidity, and reduce medical costs, prospective, locally-based, and national studies are necessary to evaluate the prevalence of AKI and identify risk factors. This information can be utilized to alter ICU policies.

DECLARATIONS

Data Availability statement

All data generated or analyzed during the study are included in the manuscript.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Approved by the department Concerned.

Consent for publication

Approved

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared absence of conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

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Manuscript revisions, critical input.

Coordination of collaborative efforts.

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