

# Lower education levels associated with fewer patient-provider conversations about kidney transplant



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## Introduction

- Kidney transplant is generally regarded as the optimal treatment for end stage kidney disease (ESKD), yet many patients with ESKD experience barriers accessing transplant.
- Conversations with renal professionals is a critical pathway for patients to understand the transplant waitlist process, yet studies show patient education level can determine the quality and substance of information shared by providers.<sup>1</sup>
- To understand the impact of patient-provider conversations on ESKD treatment options, the American Kidney Fund (AKF) surveyed its financial assistance recipients who all have lower incomes and are either on dialysis or living with a kidney transplant.

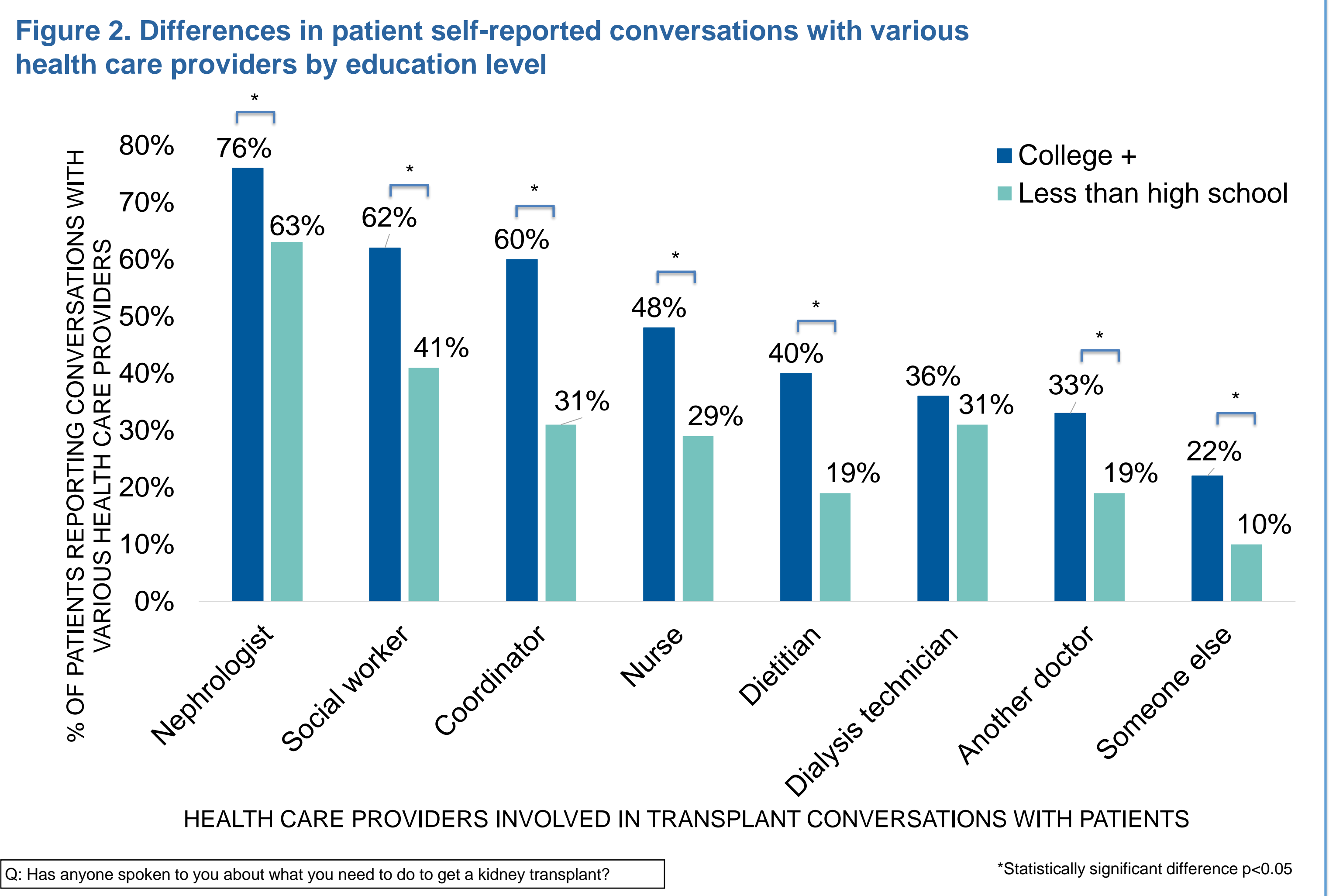
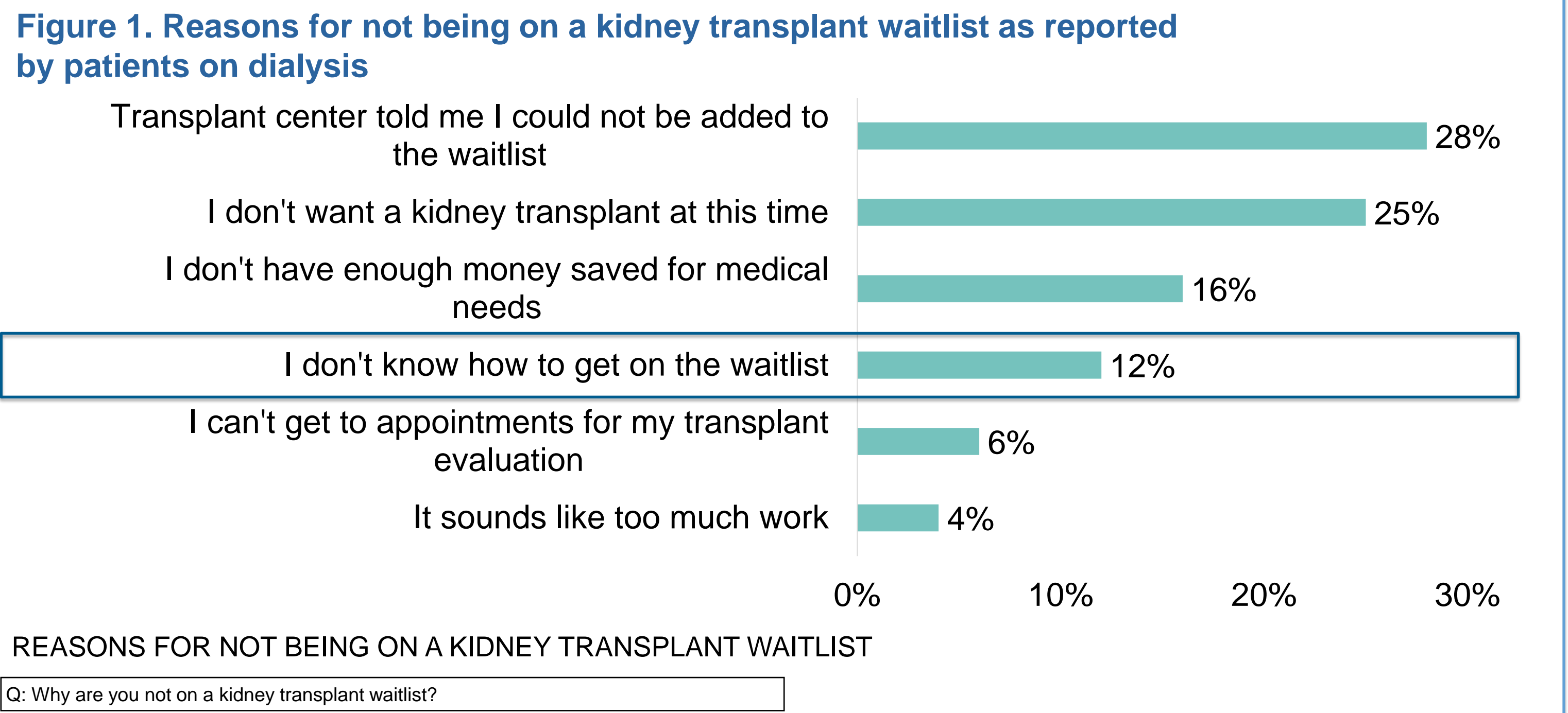
## Methods

- 1 3,000 individuals were randomly selected from AKF's Grant Management System (GMS) database.
- 2 To eliminate broadband access as a barrier to participation, a dual method of U.S. postal mail and phone was applied to administer the survey.
- 3 The survey, which was written at an 8th grade reading level, was available in both English and Spanish.
- 4 Survey featured 30 questions and incorporated multiple choice, Likert scale, multi-select, and open response, about treatment modalities, provider conversations about treatment options, and barriers and drivers to treatments.
- 5 The survey fielded from May 4 - June 29, 2022.

## Results

- 856 respondents completed the survey, with a response rate = 29%; n=540 by mail and n=316 by phone, respectively.
- Respondents on dialysis had a high interest in transplant (80%), however over half were either not on a transplant waitlist or uncertain whether they were.
- One of the top barriers to getting on the waitlist included waitlist process uncertainty (Figure 1).
- 93% of survey respondents reported hearing about transplant as an option, yet those with a college degree or higher reported speaking to a renal professional about transplant as an option at a statistically significant higher rate (p<0.05) than those without a high school diploma.

## Results Continued



## Conclusion

- Survey results demonstrate AKF financial assistance recipients are interested in transplant, yet experience access barriers including uncertainty about the waitlist process.
- While most patients report hearing about transplant from renal professionals, patients without a high school diploma report fewer transplant conversations with renal professionals.
- Future research is needed to understand why and how patient education level impacts the substance of provider conversations; and for identifying interventions that eliminate level of education as a disparity as a cause of inequality in health outcomes.

## References

1 Verlinde, E., De Laender, N., De Maesschalck, S., Deveugele, M., & Willems, S. The social gradient in doctor-patient communication. *International Journal for Equity in Health*. <https://equityhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1475-9276-11-12>

## Acknowledgements

The American Kidney Fund's **Kidney Health for All™** initiative is made possible thanks to the generous support of Presenting sponsors Boehringer Ingelheim/Lilly, Travere Therapeutics, and Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Leadership sponsors AstraZeneca and Merck; and Equity sponsors Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc. and Sanofi.

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