



HEALTH AWARENESS

The Most Common Disease You've Probably Never Heard Of Families Search For A Cure For Polycystic Kidney Disease

(NAPSA)—Most people have never heard of polycystic kidney disease (PKD), but for the 600,000 Americans living with the disease, its deadly consequences are all too familiar.

PKD is the most common of all life-threatening genetic diseases, affecting more people than cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, Down's syndrome, and Huntington's disease—*combined*.

PKD causes cysts to form in both kidneys, ranging from the size of a pinhead to the size of a grapefruit. As the cysts increase in number and size, they begin to interfere with kidney function. The cysts can eventually lead to kidney failure, necessitating dialysis or a kidney transplant, and sometimes leading to death.

A parent with PKD has a 50 percent chance of passing the disease on to *each* of his or her children. As a result of the strong genetic component, PKD can frequently be traced through multiple generations of families. By the time symptoms of PKD appear, an affected person has probably witnessed parents, grandparents, siblings, or cousins suffer through kidney failure, dialysis, transplantation, and even death—all because of the relentless growth of the cysts.

Despite its prevalence, it is estimated fewer than one percent of American adults are aware of PKD. This may be due to a lack of visible symptoms, difficulty in pronouncing polycystic kidney disease, or the absence of a celebrity spokesperson.

The low level of awareness results in a tremendous difficulty

Recognizing Polycystic Kidney Disease

PKD can be diagnosed by ultrasound, computed tomography (CT) scan, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Symptoms of polycystic kidney disease generally appear between the ages of 20 and 40 and include:

- High blood pressure
- Constant or intermittent pain in the back, side, or stomach
- Blood in the urine
- Kidney stones
- Frequent urinary tract infections
- A family history of kidney problems, heart problems, or strokes



in raising funds to find treatments and a cure. Federal funding for PKD is less than funding for many less prevalent diseases and few companies are dedicating resources to research PKD treatment options.

One organization has dedicated itself to easing the burden of PKD. The PKD Foundation, based in Kansas City, Mo., is the only organization in the world dedicated to fighting the disease through research into treatments and a cure, and through advocacy on behalf of the PKD community.

The PKD Foundation, guided by an esteemed board of trustees and a scientific advisory committee, works tirelessly to raise funds to lead aggressive research initiatives and dramatically increase revenues for PKD research.

To learn more about PKD, or to assist in the vital search for a cure, visit the PKD Foundation's Web site at www.pkdcure.org or call 1-800-PKD-CURE (1-800-753-2873).