

# **Compassion as a competitive advantage in South Africa's dialysis healthcare industry**

Soveshen Naidoo

National Renal Care, Durban, South Africa

## **Abstract**

**Background:** In the competitive dialysis industry in South Africa, dialysis organizations are required to use innovative strategic initiatives to maintain or improve their positions as industry and market leaders. The research aims to understand the benefits of compassion towards individual patients and the organization, as well as investigate if these benefits might contribute to a competitive advantage. Compassion in the dialysis healthcare industry is providing empathic care and support to patients receiving dialysis treatment. This method prioritizes comprehension, compassion, and profound empathy towards the physical, emotional, and psychological difficulties experienced by patients with kidney failure undergoing dialysis.

**Methods:** This qualitative study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants from a dialysis organization in South Africa. The interviews consisted of direct questioning using open-ended questions to gather participant observations and experiences in the dialysis healthcare industry. A purposive sampling approach was used to choose the eighteen participants ranging from junior to executive management. The data was subjected to a thematic analysis to discover the underlying themes.

**Results:** The study findings indicated that compassion may provide benefits for both the individual patients and the organization, including enhancements in quality of life, patient experience, staff engagement, and physician engagement. Furthermore, the research underscored the significance of value-based care and patient-centred care, which might provide advantages for both individual patients and dialysis organizations in South Africa.

**Conclusion:** The study indicates that compassion may provide a competitive advantage to dialysis organizations in South Africa by adopting either a cost focused or differentiation focused competitive strategy within the paradigm of Porter's generic competitive strategies. Based on these findings, it is recommended that dialysis organizations implement a structured program to teach and encourage compassion, integrate compassion into the organization's culture, assess and track compassionate practices, and utilize technology to enhance compassionate care.