

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

CKD of undetermined cause is the leading cause of death among working-age adults in a number of Central American countries. This is the first community-based, longitudinal study undertaken in the at-risk population. The results show striking evolution of disease with a substantial proportion of initially apparently healthy men and a small number of women experiencing rapid loss of kidney function over the 2-year follow-up. Although a number of occupational risk factors were identified, the range of study participants who sustained loss of eGFR suggests that other factors also play a role. These findings describe a highly prevalent, uniquely aggressive kidney disease with no clear cause. Gaining insight into the etiology should be a global health research priority.