

1 **A Comparison of Sodium-Glucose Co-Transporter 2 Inhibitor Kidney Outcome Trial Participants**  
2 **with a Real-World Chronic Kidney Disease Primary Care Population**

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21 Running head: SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials

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29 **ABSTRACT**

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31 **Background/hypothesis.** Observational studies suggest sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 (SGLT2)  
32 inhibitor kidney outcome trials are not representative of the broader population of people with  
33 chronic kidney disease (CKD). However, there are limited data on the generalisability to those  
34 without co-existing type 2 diabetes (T2D), and the representativeness of the EMPA-KIDNEY trial has  
35 not been adequately explored. We hypothesised that SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials are  
36 more representative of people with co-existing T2D than those without, and that EMPA-KIDNEY is  
37 more representative than previous trials.

38

39 **Methods.** A cross-sectional analysis of adults with CKD in English primary care was conducted using  
40 the Oxford-Royal College of General Practitioners Clinical Information Digital Hub. The proportions  
41 that met the eligibility criteria of SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials were determined, and their  
42 characteristics described. Logistic regression analyses were performed to identify factors associated  
43 with trial eligibility.

44

45 **Results.** Of 6,670,829 adults, 516,491 (7.7%) with CKD were identified. In the real-world CKD  
46 population, 0.9%, 2.2%, and 8.0% met the CREDENCE, DAPA-CKD, and EMPA-KIDNEY eligibility  
47 criteria, respectively. All trials were more representative of people with co-existing T2D than those  
48 without T2D. Trial participants were 9-14 years younger than the real-world CKD population, and  
49 had more advanced CKD, including higher levels of albuminuria. A higher proportion of the  
50 CREDENCE (100%), DAPA-CKD (67.6%) and EMPA-KIDNEY (44.5%) trial participants had T2D  
51 compared to the real-world CKD population (32.8%). Renin-angiotensin system inhibitors were

52 prescribed in almost all trial participants, compared to less than half of the real-world CKD  
53 population. Females were under-represented and less likely to be eligible for the trials.

54 **Conclusion.** SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials represent a sub-group of people with CKD at high  
55 risk of adverse kidney events. Out study highlights the importance of complementing trials with real-  
56 world studies, exploring the effectiveness of SGLT2 inhibitors in the broader population of people  
57 with CKD.

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80 **KEY LEARNING POINTS**

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82 **What was known:**

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84 Observational studies have indicated that SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trial participants are not  
85 representative of the broader population of people with CKD.

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87 Additionally, there are limited data on the generalisability to those without co-existing T2D, and the  
88 representativeness of the EMPA-KIDNEY trial has not been adequately explored.

89

90 No study to date has examined the generalisability of the SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials to  
91 people living with CKD in an English primary care setting.

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93 **This study adds:**

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95 In this study of people with CKD in an English primary care setting, we found that less than 10%  
96 would have been eligible for each of the trials under investigation.

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98 The EMPA-KIDNEY trial was the most representative, applying to 8% of the real-world primary care  
99 CKD population. This was largely driven by the recruitment of participants without albuminuria.

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101 Each of the trials under investigation were more representative of people with CKD and co-existing  
102 T2D compared to those without T2D.

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106 **Potential impact:**

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108 SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials represent a sub-group of people living with CKD in English  
109 primary care at high risk of adverse kidney events.

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111 The findings of our study highlight the importance of complementing clinical trials with real-world  
112 studies, to explore the effectiveness of SGLT2 inhibitors in the broader population of people with  
113 CKD treated in real-world clinical practice.

114

115 **Keywords:** chronic, computerized, cross-sectional studies, kidney failure, medical records systems,  
116 primary health care, sodium-glucose transporter 2 inhibitors

117

118 **INTRODUCTION**

119

120 Sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitors are established glucose-lowering drugs for the  
121 treatment of type 2 diabetes (T2D)<sup>1</sup>. Randomised controlled trials demonstrated that these drugs  
122 reduce the risk of kidney failure in people with chronic kidney disease (CKD), including individuals  
123 with and without co-existing T2D<sup>2-4</sup>. However, these trials were conducted in participants at high risk  
124 of serious kidney events, whom may not be representative of people with CKD in clinical practice.  
125 Several observational studies have explored the generalisability of trial eligibility criteria to  
126 determine the extent to which the findings apply to people with CKD in real-world clinical practice.

127

128 A study based in the United States (US) used data from the National Health and Nutrition  
129 Examination Survey (NHANES) between 2009 and 2018 to calculate the number of adults with









208 <60 mL/min/1.73<sup>2</sup> (based on a minimum of 2 serum creatinine measurements taken at least 90 days  
209 apart), and proteinuria defined as urine ACR >3 mg/mmol or urine protein creatinine ratio (PCR) >15  
210 mg/mmol (based on a minimum of 2 measurements taken at least 90 days apart)<sup>12</sup>. eGFR was  
211 calculated using the Chronic Kidney Disease Epidemiology Collaboration (CKD-EPI) 2021 equation<sup>13</sup>.  
212 We identified individuals that met the eligibility criteria of three SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome  
213 trials, CREDENCE, DAPA-CKD, and EMPA-KIDNEY. Eligibility was assessed separately for each trial and  
214 criteria were applied to the total CKD population (CKD cohort), CKD population with co-existing T2D  
215 (CKD-T2D cohort) and CKD cohort without T2D (CKD without T2D cohort). Individuals were classified  
216 as eligible if they fulfilled the published inclusion and exclusion criteria for a trial. The major  
217 eligibility criteria and how we defined them in our primary care population are summarised in Table  
218 1. We also reported the eligibility criteria that we could not apply to our population (Supplementary  
219 Table S1).

220

## 221 **Data Preparation**

222

223 We extracted demographic and clinical characteristics of the CKD population including clinical  
224 measures, co-morbidities, and prescribed medications. Data were captured at the time of extraction  
225 using the most recently available information prior to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. A current  
226 prescription was defined as a prescription for a drug within that class within the last 90 days.

227

228 Ethnicity was grouped into five categories (White, Asian, Black, Mixed, and Other), based on the  
229 Office for National Statistics definitions<sup>14</sup>. Socio-economic status was determined by the Index of  
230 Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score, which was converted into quintiles ranging from 1 (most deprived)  
231 to 5 (least deprived)<sup>15</sup>. IMD score was based on the postcode of the individual's registered home  
232 address. Continuous data were cleaned, and outlying values excluded and assigned as missing based

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233 on expert opinion within the study team, and previously published ranges (Supplementary  
234 Appendix)<sup>16</sup>.

235

236 Information about the characteristics of trial participants were extracted from published data<sup>2-4</sup>.

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#### 240 **Missing Data**

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242 We reported missing data when describing the characteristics of the CKD population and addressed  
243 missing data to investigate factors associated with trial eligibility. We assumed missing data for  
244 ethnicity were unlikely to be missing at random. Individuals with missing ethnicity data were  
245 assigned to the 'White' ethnicity category. Practice postcode was used to infer socio-economic  
246 status where data were missing.

247

248 Clinical measures recorded  $\geq 2$  years prior to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 were assigned as missing. We  
249 assumed that missing data for clinical measures were missing at random, and that any systematic  
250 differences between missing values and observed values could explained by differences in the  
251 observed data<sup>17</sup>. Multivariate Imputation by Chained Equations was used to impute missing values<sup>18</sup>.

252 We made multiple predictions (N = 5) for each missing value, creating multiple 'complete' datasets  
253 which were combined using Rubin's rules.

254

#### 255 **Outcome measures**

256

257 The primary outcome was the proportion of the CKD population who would have been eligible for  
258 the CREDENCE, DAPA-CKD, or EMPA-KIDNEY trials according to the enrolment criteria.

259

260 The secondary outcomes were to describe the characteristics of the trial eligible CKD populations  
261 and compare them to participants enrolled in the SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials, and explore  
262 factors associated with trial eligibility.

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### 266 **Statistical analysis**

267

268 Descriptive statistics were used to report the primary outcome and describe the characteristics of  
269 the CREDENCE, DAPA-CKD, and EMPA-KIDNEY trial eligible CKD populations. Means (standard  
270 deviation [SD]) or medians (interquartile range [IQR]) were used to describe continuous variables,  
271 and frequencies and percentages were used to describe categorical variables.

272

273 The primary outcome was calculated separately for each trial by dividing the number of patients in  
274 each population that fulfilled the key eligibility criteria by the total population (CKD cohort, CKD-T2D  
275 cohort and CKD without T2D cohort). If an individual was missing data for clinical measures relating  
276 to the eligibility criteria (e.g., eGFR or urine ACR), we assumed that they did not meet the eligibility  
277 criteria. We also reported the proportion of individuals excluded by each eligibility criteria,  
278 separately for each trial.

279

280 The secondary outcomes were reported separately for each trial. We selected characteristics based  
281 on those reported in the clinical trials, including demographics, clinical measures, co-morbidities,  
282 and prescribed medications.

283

284 We compared the characteristics of the trial eligible CKD cohorts with those included in the trials  
285 using standardised differences (st. diff.) between means or proportions<sup>19</sup>. Meaningful differences  
286 between values were set at >0.1. Data required for this analysis were extracted from information  
287 reported in the intervention arms of the clinical trials.

288

289 Logistic regression models were created to investigate factors associated with trial eligibility and to  
290 determine the phenotype of patients eligible for each trial. We constructed separate models for  
291 CREDENCE, DAPA-CKD, and EMPA-KIDNEY eligibility. Variables included in the models were pre-  
292 specified as age (years), sex (male, female), ethnicity (White, Asian, Black Mixed, Other), IMD  
293 quintile (1-5), Cambridge Multi Morbidity Score (CMMS)<sup>20</sup>, history of T2D, heart failure, or  
294 cardiovascular disease (CVD) (absent, present), and current prescription for a diuretic or statin  
295 (absent, present). Odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence intervals (CI) and *p*-values were reported  
296 for each variable.

297

298 All data analyses were undertaken in R version 4.3.0 (2023-04-21).

299

### 300 **Sensitivity Analyses**

301

302 We performed a complete case analysis for the primary outcome, which we defined as individuals  
303 who had both an eGFR and urine ACR recorded within 2 years of the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Using the  
304 complete cases only CKD population, we then recalculated the proportion of CKD patients that met  
305 trial eligibility criteria for each trial.

306

307 We performed two sensitivity analyses of the logistic regression models, exploring factors associated  
308 with trial eligibility using complete cases, to check consistency of the findings with those of the  
309 primary analysis. For the first sensitivity analysis, we defined complete cases as individuals with CKD

310 who had recorded measurements for all variables in the logistic regression model. For the second  
311 sensitivity analysis, we further defined this to include only those in the first sensitivity analysis who  
312 had both an eGFR and urine ACR recorded within 2 years of the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

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## 319 **RESULTS**

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### 321 **Representativeness results**

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323 Of 6,670,829 adults, we identified 516,491 (7.7%) with CKD, including 32.8% (n = 169,443) with co-  
324 existing T2D. In the real-world CKD population, 0.9% (n = 4,740), 2.2% (n = 11,516), and 8.0% (n =  
325 41,209) met the CREDENCE, DAPA-CKD, and EMPA-KIDNEY eligibility criteria, respectively (Figure 1).

326

327 CREDENCE eligibility criteria applied to 2.8% (n = 4,740) of the CKD-T2D population, but the eligibility  
328 criteria did not include the CKD population without T2D. The DAPA-CKD eligibility criteria applied to  
329 4.7% (n = 8,036) of the CKD-T2D population, and 1.0% (n = 3,480) of the CKD without T2D  
330 population, whilst the EMPA-KIDNEY eligibility criteria applied to 13.1% (n = 22,114) of the CKD-T2D  
331 population, and 5.5% (n = 19,095) of the CKD without T2D population.

332

333 There were multiple reasons why individuals did not meet trial eligibility criteria (Figure S2 & S3). Of  
334 those who were ineligible for the CREDENCE (n = 164,703), DAPA-CKD (n = 504,975), and EMPA-

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335 KIDNEY (n = 475,282) trials, over one third were not prescribed a renin-angiotensin system (RAS)  
336 inhibitor (37.8% [n = 62,183], 56.1% [n = 283,316] and 59.6% [n = 283,316], respectively).

337

338 Of the CKD-T2D cohort ineligible for CREDENCE due to not being prescribed a RAS inhibitor (N =  
339 62,183), 83.8% (n = 52,135) did not meet albuminuria criteria and 7.9% (n = 4937) did not have an  
340 assessment of albuminuria. Of those ineligible for DAPA-CKD due to not being prescribed a RAS  
341 inhibitor (N = 283,316), 55.8% (n = 158,152) did not meet albuminuria criteria and 39.8% (n =  
342 112,751) did not have an assessment of albuminuria. Of those ineligible for EMPA-KIDNEY due to not  
343 being prescribed a RAS inhibitor (N = 283,316), 41.7% (n = 118,171) did not meet albuminuria criteria  
344 and 17.7% (n = 50,198) did not have an assessment of albuminuria.

345 Of the CREDENCE ineligible CKD-T2D population, 87.5% (n = 144,134) had either no albuminuria or  
346 albuminuria below the threshold (defined as urine ACR  $\leq 33.9$  mg/mmol), whilst 66.3% (n = 334,742)  
347 of the DAPA-CKD and 50.9% (n = 241,708) of the EMPA-KIDNEY ineligible total CKD populations had  
348 either no albuminuria or albuminuria below the threshold (DAPA-CKD; urine ACR  $< 22.6$  mg/mmol,  
349 EMPA-KIDNEY; urine ACR  $< 22.6$  mg/mmol in those with an eGFR  $\geq 45$  and  $< 90$  mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>).  
350 Absence of albuminuria assessment was an issue in 5.5% (n = 9,061) of the CREDENCE ineligible  
351 cohort, 29.2% (n = 147,466) of the DAPA-CKD ineligible cohort, and 15.6% (n = 74,353) of the EMPA-  
352 KIDNEY ineligible cohort. Less than 10% of those who were ineligible had one of the exclusion  
353 criteria (CREDENCE; 3.5% [n = 5,696], DAPA-CKD; 2.3% [11,482], and EMPA-KIDNEY; 8.4% [39,776]).

354

### 355 **Comparison of characteristics**

356

357 Trial participants were younger compared to the trial eligible primary care CKD populations (Tables 2  
358 and 3). The EMPA-KIDNEY trial had a lower proportion of females compared to the trial eligible  
359 population (33.2% females vs. 49.0% females, st. diff. = 0.33) , whilst the proportion of females was  
360 similar in the DAPA-CKD and CREDENCE trials when compared to their respective trial eligible

361 populations (DAPA-CKD; 32.9% females vs. 34.0% females, st. diff. = 0.02, CREDENCE; 34.6% females  
362 vs. 32.7% females, st. diff. = 0.04). DAPA-CKD and EMPA-KIDNEY participants had lower burden of  
363 CVD and heart failure, compared to their respective trial eligible populations (DAPA-CKD; 37.8% CVD  
364 vs. 54.7% CVD, st. diff. = 0.34, 10.9% heart failure vs. 18.6% heart failure, st. diff. = 0.22, EMPA-  
365 KIDNEY; 26.1% CVD vs. 48.0% CVD, st. diff. = 0.47, 9.8% heart failure vs. 23.7% heart failure, st. diff. =  
366 0.38), whilst a higher proportion of CREDENCE participants had CVD compared to the trial eligible  
367 CREDENCE population (50.5% CVD vs. 37.8% CVD, st. diff. = 0.26). In all three trials, participants had a  
368 lower eGFR (CREDENCE;  $56.3 \pm 18.2$  mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> vs.  $58.7 \pm 16.7$  mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>, st. diff. = 0.14,  
369 DAPA-CKD;  $43.2 \pm 12.3$  mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> vs.  $50.6 \pm 13.6$  mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>, st. diff. = 0.57, EMPA-  
370 KIDNEY;  $37.4 \pm 14.5$  mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup> vs.  $44.1 \pm 14.4$  mL/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>, st. diff. = 0.46) and more  
371 albuminuria (CREDENCE; 104.3 mg/mmol [IQR 51.9-202.7 mg/mmol] vs. 68.5 mg/mmol [IQR 46.7-  
372 119.9 mg/mmol], DAPA-CKD; 109.1 mg/mmol [IQR 53.3-215.0 mg/mmol] vs. 51.6 mg/mmol [IQR  
373 32.7-98.1 mg/mmol], EMPA-KIDNEY; 37.4 mg/mmol [IQR 5.2-119.9 mg/mmol] vs. 5.9 mg/mmol [IQR  
374 1.5-34.3 mg/mmol]) than the trial eligible populations.

375

376 Trial participants differed substantially from the real-world primary care CKD population. A higher  
377 proportion of CREDENCE (100%), DAPA-CKD (67.6%) and EMPA-KIDNEY (44.5%) trial participants had  
378 T2D, compared to the real-world CKD population (32.8%). RAS inhibitors were prescribed to almost  
379 all trial participants, compared to less than half (45.1%) of the real-world CKD population and under  
380 two thirds (63.3%) of the real-world CKD-T2D population.

381

### 382 **Factors associated with trial eligibility**

383

384 The logistic regression analyses exploring factors associated with trial eligibility showed that females  
385 were less likely than males to be eligible for each trial (Table 4). People of Asian or Black ethnicity  
386 were more likely to be eligible for each of the trials than those of White ethnicity. Hypertension was

387 associated with higher odds of being eligible for all three trials, whilst T2D and heart failure were  
388 associated with higher odds of being eligible for the DAPA-CKD and EMPA-KIDNEY trials. However,  
389 people with heart failure were less likely to be eligible for the CREDENCE trial (OR 0.85, 95% CI  
390 0.776–0.929;  $p < 0.001$ ). People with CVD were less likely to be eligible for the EMPA-KIDNEY trial (OR  
391 0.90, 95% CI 0.881–0.924;  $p < 0.001$ ), but were more likely to be eligible for the CREDENCE trial (OR  
392 1.11, 1.042–1.186;  $p < 0.001$ ). Higher CMMS was associated with greater likelihood of being eligible  
393 for the DAPA-CKD (OR 1.15, 95% CI 1.121–1.183;  $p < 0.001$ ), EMPA-KIDNEY (OR 1.05, 95% CI 1.039–  
394 1.071;  $p < 0.001$ ) and CREDENCE trials (OR 1.12, 95% CI 1.070–1.164;  $p < 0.001$ ). Use of statins and  
395 diuretics were also associated with higher likelihood of being eligible for each of the trials. For the  
396 EMPA-KIDNEY trial, the OR for trial eligibility increased with each unit increase in age (OR 1.03, 95%  
397 CI 1.031–1.033;  $p < 0.001$ ), but there was no association for the DAPA-CKD and CREDENCE trials.  
398 Individuals within the most deprived category (IMD quintile 1) were more likely to be eligible for the  
399 CREDENCE trial than those from the least deprived category (IMD quintile 5) (OR 1.12, 95% CI 1.018–  
400 1.239;  $p = 0.021$ ) but were less likely to be eligible for the EMPA-KIDNEY trial (OR 0.95, 95% CI 0.912–  
401 0.979;  $p = 0.002$ ). People that were underweight were less likely to be eligible for each trial than  
402 those of normal weight, however, the odds of being eligible for each trial were greater in the higher  
403 BMI categories.

404

#### 405 **Sensitivity analysis**

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407 Supplementary Figure S1 illustrates the sensitivity analysis of complete cases for the primary  
408 outcome, which identified that 1.3% ( $n = 4,740$ ), 3.1% ( $n = 11,516$ ) and 10.4% ( $n = 38,214$ ) of the  
409 real-world CKD population ( $N = 367,386$ ) met the eligibility criteria of the CREDENCE, DAPA-CKD, and  
410 EMPA-KIDNEY trials, respectively. The CREDENCE enrolment criteria applied to 3.0% of the CKD-T2D  
411 cohort ( $N = 160,095$ ). The DAPA-CKD enrolment criteria applied to 5.0% ( $n = 8,036$ ) of the CKD-T2D  
412 cohort and 1.7% ( $n = 3,480$ ) of the CKD without T2D cohort, whilst the EMPA-KIDNEY enrolment



413 criteria applied to 13.5% (n = 21,579) of the CKD-T2D cohort and 8.0% (n = 16,635) of the CKD  
414 without T2D cohort. The two sensitivity analyses of complete cases of the logistic regression models  
415 exploring factors associated with trial eligibility were generally consistent with the primary analysis  
416 (Supplementary Tables S4 & S5).

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## 424 **DISCUSSION**

425

426 We performed a comprehensive evaluation of the generalisability of three SGLT2 inhibitor kidney  
427 outcome trials to a large primary care population with CKD, including those with or without co-  
428 existing T2D. We hypothesised that SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials are more representative of  
429 people with co-existing T2D than those without T2D, and that the EMPA-KIDNEY study is more  
430 representative than previous trials.

431

432 SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials represent a sub-group of people with CKD who are at high risk  
433 of adverse kidney events. In English primary care, less than 10% of English primary care patients with  
434 CKD would have been eligible for each of the SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials under  
435 investigation. The EMPA-KIDNEY trial was the most representative, applying to 8% of the real-world  
436 CKD population. This was largely driven by the recruitment of participants without albuminuria,  
437 whilst the DAPA-CKD and CREDENCE trials required participants to have significant albuminuria  
438 (urine ACR  $\geq 22.6$  mg/mmol and  $>33.9$  mg/mmol, respectively). The CREDENCE trial was the least

439 generalisable, applying to only 1% of the real-world CKD population. This was due to the  
440 requirement to have both T2D and albuminuria. We also found all three trials to be more  
441 representative of patients with CKD and co-existing T2D, compared to those with CKD but without  
442 T2D.

443

444 Our findings are broadly consistent with previous studies conducted in other settings. Investigators  
445 in the US estimated that between 3% and 10% of people with T2D met trial inclusion criteria, with  
446 the lowest proportion eligible for CREDENCE, and the highest proportion eligible for EMPA-  
447 KIDNEY<sup>5,10</sup>. Similar results were reported in a Taiwanese cohort of patients with T2D receiving  
448 canagliflozin in the Chang Gung Research Database (N = 1,479). After applying the trial inclusion  
449 criteria, they estimated that only 5% were eligible for the CREDENCE study<sup>6</sup>. A study based in Italy  
450 found that 17% of patients with CKD treated in outpatient nephrology clinics, met the DAPA-CKD  
451 eligibility criteria<sup>8</sup>. However, this cohort comprised a large proportion of patients with advanced CKD  
452 (defined as eGFR <30mL/min/1.72m<sup>2</sup>), likely accounting for this notable difference.

453

454 In our study, several factors contributed to why people with CKD were ineligible for the trials,  
455 including low RAS inhibitor usage and inadequate assessment of albuminuria, which reflect clinician  
456 practice rather than trial design. The majority of those ineligible due to not being prescribed a RAS  
457 inhibitor either did not meet albuminuria criteria or had not been assessed for albuminuria,  
458 reflecting that many people do not have proteinuric kidney disease and that albuminuria is not  
459 adequately evaluated. CKD guidelines recommend assessment of urine ACR in people with CKD, and  
460 consistent with our findings, it remains poorly implemented in clinical practice, particularly in those  
461 without co-existing T2D<sup>21,22</sup>. Enhanced efforts to test urine ACR in people with CKD are needed to  
462 risk stratify and identify those with albuminuria who are most likely to benefit from interventions  
463 such as RAS inhibitors and SGLT2 inhibitors. We identified that SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trial  
464 participants differed substantially from the real-world English primary care CKD population; trial

465 participants were younger, more likely to have a co-existing T2D, and had more advanced kidney  
466 disease, with lower eGFR and higher levels of albuminuria, compared to the trial eligible and total  
467 CKD primary care populations. In contrast to almost all trial participants, RAS inhibitors were  
468 prescribed to less than half of the total primary care CKD population. In addition, females were  
469 under-represented in all three SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials and were less likely than males  
470 to be eligible for each trial. These findings were similarly observed in studies evaluating the  
471 generalisability of the DAPA-CKD and EMPA-KIDNEY trials to US populations<sup>7,9</sup>.

472  
473 Understanding how representative trial participants are of a real-world CKD population is important  
474 when extrapolating the findings to patients encountered in routine clinical practice<sup>24-26</sup>. Differences  
475 in characteristics between trial participants and those receiving the intervention in the real-world  
476 may alter its effectiveness and safety profile. It is important to note that the purposeful recruitment  
477 of individuals with certain characteristics is valuable in determining treatment effects in sub-groups  
478 and extending the existing evidence base. The 'over-representation' of patients with more advanced  
479 kidney disease in the DAPA-CKD and EMPA-KIDNEY trials was intended to determine if the SGLT2  
480 inhibitor benefits observed in previous trials extended to those with lower eGFR. A lack of  
481 representativeness should therefore not necessarily be viewed negatively, but rather as a factor for  
482 consideration when applying evidence to patients encountered in routine clinical practice.

483  
484 Sub-group analyses of SGLT2 inhibitor trials have investigated their effects in different groups of  
485 people with CKD. Secondary analysis of the EMPA-KIDNEY study examined the annual rate of decline  
486 of kidney function (eGFR slope), demonstrating that the kidney benefits of SGLT2 inhibitors extend  
487 to those with lower levels of albuminuria and across a range of eGFRs<sup>27</sup>. The magnitude of effect  
488 varied significantly depending on diabetes status and baseline levels of urine ACR and eGFR<sup>27</sup>.  
489 However, a recent collaborative meta-analysis of SGLT2 inhibitors showed no significant  
490 heterogeneity by diabetes status with regards to kidney outcomes<sup>28</sup>. Clinical trials have not

491 evaluated the kidney efficacy of SGLT2 inhibitors in people with CKD in the absence of RAS  
492 inhibition. This remains an important question as many people with CKD are not prescribed a RAS  
493 inhibitor. The absence of a RAS inhibitor may not preclude an individual from benefiting from SGLT2  
494 inhibitors, but further data are needed.

495

496 These secondary analyses of clinical trials provide valuable insights into the effects of SGLT2  
497 inhibitors in different groups of people with CKD. Real-world evidence can complement this,  
498 evaluating the effectiveness of SGLT2 inhibitors in wider, more diverse populations of patients.  
499 Importantly, real-world data allows for longer term follow-up in individuals at lower risk of adverse  
500 kidney events and in the absence of RAS inhibition. Observational studies utilising real-world data  
501 sources including patient registries, administrative claims, and electronic health records are well  
502 positioned to facilitate this.

### 503 **LIMITATIONS**

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505 Practices within the Oxford-RCGP RSC network are broadly representative of the English general  
506 population but participation in the network is voluntary, resulting in a degree of selection bias<sup>11</sup>. The  
507 network has a higher proportion of younger working aged adults, slightly less deprivation, and  
508 practices are unevenly geographically distributed when compared with the national population. The  
509 major enrolment criteria were successfully applied to the CKD population, but we were unable to  
510 apply some of the minor exclusion criteria, which may have over-estimated the number of trial  
511 eligible individuals. For example, our finding that the prevalence of cardiovascular disease in the trial  
512 eligible DAPA-CKD cohort was higher compared to the trial cohort could be due to the exclusion  
513 criterion for the trial to not have a cardiovascular event within the last 12 weeks before enrolment.

514

515 A limitation of identifying trial eligibility criteria from primary care data is missing data and  
516 misclassification bias arising from absent or incorrect coding<sup>29</sup>. However, data quality in the Oxford-

517 RCGP RSC network is enhanced by practice engagement through a specialised team of practice  
518 liaison officers and ontological mapping to capture data accurately. We identified and adjusted for  
519 potential confounders in our models, but unmeasured factors may have resulted in residual  
520 confounding, which is a limitation of our multivariable analyses.

521

## 522 **CONCLUSION**

523

524 SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials represent a sub-group of people with CKD that are at high risk  
525 of adverse kidney events. In English primary care, less than 10% of people with CKD would have  
526 been eligible for each of the SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials under investigation. In contrast to  
527 trial participants, most people with CKD do not have albuminuria, many do not have co-existing T2D,  
528 and less than half are prescribed a RAS inhibitor. Our findings highlight the importance of  
529 complementing clinical trials with real-world studies, exploring the effectiveness of SGLT2 inhibitors  
530 in the broader population of people with CKD treated in routine clinical practice.

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548

549 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

550

551 All authors have completed the ICMJE uniform disclosure form at [http://www.icmje.org/disclosure-  
553 of-interest/](http://www.icmje.org/disclosure-<br/>552 of-interest/). AF, WE, MJ, JM, XF, NC, NM and MW declare: no support from any organisation for the  
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579

#### 580 **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

581

582 AF and WH conceptualised and designed the study with input from all authors. FX performed the  
583 data extraction. AF and WH performed the analysis with contributions from WE, MJ and JM. All  
584 authors, led by AF and WH, were involved in data interpretation. AF and WH led the drafting of the  
585 manuscript with contributions from all authors. All authors reviewed and approved the final draft of  
586 the manuscript. AF and WH directly accessed and verified the underlying data. SdeL is responsible  
587 for the decision to submit the manuscript and attests that all listed authors meet authorship criteria  
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589

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591

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594

595 **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

596

597 Access to pseudonymised patient level data will be considered on reasonable request to the  
598 corresponding author.

599

600

601 **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

602

603 Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics  
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605 George's Research Ethics Committee, Joint Research and Enterprise Services, St George's University  
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**Table 1:** The major eligibility criteria of SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials and how they were defined in the primary care CKD population.

SGLT2 Inhibitor Kidney Outcome Trial Eligibility Criteria	Definition In Primary Care CKD Population
<b>CREDESCENCE</b>	
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	
≥30 years of age +	≥30 years of age
Type 2 diabetes +	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to type 2 diabetes, namely diagnostic codes, blood tests results and prescriptions
HbA1c ≥6.5 and ≤ 12.0 % +	HbA1c ≥47.5 and ≤ 107.7 mmol/mol
eGFR ≥30 and <90 mL/min/1.73 <sup>2</sup> +	eGFR ≥30 and <90 mL/min/1.73 <sup>2</sup> using CKD-EPI
Urine ACR >300 and ≤5000 mg/g +	Urine ACR >33.9 and ≤565.5 mg/mmol
On maximum tolerated dose of RAS inhibitor if not contraindicated	Current prescription for RAS inhibitor
<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	
NYHA Class IV Congestive Heart Failure	Coding of NYHA Class IV Congestive Heart Failure
Known significant liver disease	Coding of liver cirrhosis
Maintenance dialysis	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to receiving dialysis in the context of ESKD
Kidney transplantation	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to having a kidney transplant
Type 1 diabetes	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to type 1 diabetes, namely diagnostic codes, blood tests results and prescriptions
Receiving combined ACE inhibitor and ARB treatment	Current prescription for both ACE inhibitor and ARB
<b>DAPA-CKD</b>	
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	
≥ 18 years of age +	≥ 18 years of age
eGFR ≥25 and ≤75 mL/min/1.73 <sup>2</sup> +	eGFR ≥25 and ≤75 mL/min/1.73 <sup>2</sup> using CKD-EPI
Urine ACR ≥200 and ≤5000 mg/g +	Urine ACR ≥22.6 and ≤565 mg/mmol
On maximum tolerated dose of RAS inhibitor if not contraindicated	Current prescription for RAS inhibitor
<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	
Autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease	Coding of autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease
Autosomal recessive polycystic kidney disease	Coding of autosomal recessive polycystic kidney disease
Lupus nephritis	Coding of lupus nephritis

ANCA associated vasculitis	Coding of ANCA associated vasculitis
History of organ transplantation	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to having an organ transplant
Type 1 diabetes	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to type 1 diabetes, namely diagnostic codes, blood tests results and prescriptions
NYHA Class IV Congestive Heart Failure	Coding of NYHA Class IV Congestive Heart Failure
<b>EMPA-KIDNEY</b>	
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	
≥ 18 years of age +	≥ 18 years of age
On maximum tolerated dose of RAS inhibitor + one of the following 2 groups:	Current prescription for RAS inhibitor
eGFR ≥20 and <45 mL/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup> or	eGFR ≥20 and <45 mL/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup> using CKD-EPI
eGFR ≥45 and <90 mL/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup> + urine ACR ≥200 mg/g (or urine PCR ≥300 mg/g)	eGFR ≥45 and <90 mL/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup> using CKD-EPI + urine ACR ≥22.6 mg/mmol (or urine PCR ≥33.9 mg/mmol)
<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	
Type 2 diabetes + prior atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (defined as IHD, stroke, PAD) + eGFR >60 mL/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to type 2 diabetes + coding of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease + eGFR >60 using CKD-EPI
Autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease	Coding of autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease
Autosomal recessive polycystic kidney disease	Coding of autosomal recessive polycystic kidney disease
Maintenance dialysis	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to receiving dialysis in the context of ESKD
Kidney transplantation	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to having a kidney transplant
Type 1 diabetes	Ontological approach combining SNOMED CT concepts relevant to type 1 diabetes, namely diagnostic codes, blood tests results and prescriptions
Receiving combined ACE inhibitor and ARB treatment	Current prescription for both ACE inhibitor and ARB

For each criterion we identified the nearest match from routine primary care data, using a combination of demographics, diagnostic tests, prescriptions, and variables curated from SNOMED CT using our ontological approach. All laboratory measurements were based on the most recently recorded values prior to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

ACE inhibitor – angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor, ANCA associated vasculitis – antineutrophilic cytoplasmic antibody associated vasculitis, ARB – angiotensin receptor blocker, CKD-EPI – chronic kidney disease epidemiology collaboration, eGFR – estimated glomerular filtration rate, ESKD – end-stage kidney disease, HbA1c – glycated haemoglobin, IHD – ischaemic heart disease, NYHA – New York Heart Association, PAD – peripheral arterial disease, RAS inhibitor – renin-angiotensin system inhibitor, SNOMED CT – Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine Clinical Terms, urine ACR – urine albumin-creatinine-ratio.

**Table 2:** Characteristics of the Trial Eligible CKD Cohorts and Participants Enrolled into the DAPA-CKD and EMPA-KIDNEY Trials.

Characteristic	DAPA-CKD Trial			EMPA-KIDNEY Trial			CKD Cohort		
	Trial Cohort (N = 2152)	Trial Eligible CKD Cohort (N = 11516)	st. diff.	Trial Cohort (N = 3304)	Trial Eligible CKD Cohort (N = 41209)	st. diff.	Total CKD Cohort (N = 516491)	st. diff.*	st. diff.¶
Age – year	61.8 ± 12.1	73.1 ± 12.7	0.91	63.9 ± 13.9	78.0 ± 11.7	1.10	70.7 ± 16.9	0.61	0.44
Female sex – n (%)	709 (32.9)	3910 (34.0)	0.02	1097 (33.2)	20208 (49.0)	0.33	279730 (54.2)	0.44	0.43
Ethnicity – n (%)									
White	1124 (52.2)	9088 (78.9)	0.59	1939 (58.7)	35032 (85.0)	0.61	437504 (84.7)	0.75	0.60
Asian	749 (34.8)	1213 (10.5)	0.61	1194 (36.1)	2461 (6.0)	0.79	27021 (5.2)	0.80	0.83
Black	104 (4.8)	562 (4.9)	0.00	128 (3.9)	1341 (3.3)	0.03	16724 (3.2)	0.08	0.04
Mixed	-	125 (1.1)	-	14 (0.4)	261 (0.6)	0.03	4232 (0.8)	-	0.05
Other	175 (8.1)	106 (0.9)	0.35	29 (0.9)	246 (0.6)	0.03	3529 (0.7)	0.37	0.02
Current smoker – n (%)	283 (13.2)	1148 (10.0)	0.10	-	2662 (6.5)	-	35690 (6.9)	0.21	-
Comorbidities – n (%)									
Type 1 diabetes	-	-	-	34 (1.0)	-	-	3802 (0.7)	-	0.03
Type 2 diabetes	1455 (67.6)	8036 (69.8)	0.05	1470 (44.5)	22114 (53.7)	0.18	169443 (32.8)	0.74	0.24
Cardiovascular disease (DAPA-CKD definition)	813 (37.8)	6304 (54.7)	0.34	-	-	-	208195 (40.3)	0.05	-
Cardiovascular disease (EMPA-KIDNEY definition)	-	-	-	861 (26.1)	19800 (48.0)	0.47	167627 (32.5)	-	0.14
Heart failure	235 (10.9)	2143 (18.6)	0.22	324 (9.8)	9777 (23.7)	0.38	58276 (11.3)	0.01	0.05
Hypertension	-	10606 (92.1)	-	-	37452 (90.9)	-	349096 (67.6)	-	-
Blood pressure – mmHg									
Systolic	136.7 ± 17.5	138.9 ± 18.6	0.12	136.4 ± 18.1	135.6 ± 17.9	0.04	133.5 (16.8)	0.19	0.17
Diastolic	77.5 ± 10.7	75.7 ± 11.6	0.16	78.1 ± 11.7	73.6 ± 11.2	0.39	75.8 (10.8)	0.16	0.20
Body mass index – kg/m <sup>2</sup>	29.4 ± 6.0	29.9 ± 6.3	0.08	29.7 ± 6.7	29.4 ± 6.2	0.05	28.5 (6.3)	0.15	0.18
Weight – kg	81.5 ± 20.1	84.9 ± 20.4	0.17	-	81.1 ± (19.3)	-	79.1 (19.6)	0.12	-
eGFR									
Mean – ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	43.2 ± 12.3	50.6 ± 13.6	0.57	37.4 ± 14.5	44.1 ± 14.4	0.46	68.4 ± 23.2	1.36	1.60
Distribution (DAPA-CKD categories) – n (%)									
<30 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	293 (13.6)	861 (7.5)	0.20	-	-	-	15103 (2.9)	0.40	-

≥30 to <45 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	979 (45.5)	3402 (29.5)	0.34	-	-	-	48706 (9.4)	0.88	-
≥45 to <60 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	646 (30.0)	3960 (34.4)	0.09	-	-	-	139403 (27.0)	0.07	-
≥60 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	234 (10.9)	3293 (28.6)	0.46	-	-	-	290952 (56.3)	1.10	-
Distribution (EMPA-KIDNEY categories) – n (%)									
<30 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	1131 (34.2)	4326 (10.5)	0.59	15103 (2.9)	-	0.88
≥30 to <45 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	1467 (44.4)	26378 (64.0)	0.40	48706 (9.4)	-	0.86
≥45 ml/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	706 (21.4)	10505 (25.5)	0.10	430355 (83.3)	-	1.58
Urine ACR									
Median (IQR) – mg/mmol	109.1 (53.3-215.0)	51.6 (32.7-98.1)	-	37.4 (5.2-119.9)	5.9 (1.5-34.3)	-	1.9 (0.8 - 5.5)	-	-
Distribution (DAPA-CKD categories) – n (%)									
>113 mg/mmol	1048 (48.7)	2410 (20.9)	0.61	-	-	-	7874 (1.5)	1.30	-
Distribution (EMPA-KIDNEY categories) – n (%)									
<3 mg/mmol	-	-	-	665 (20.1)	15021 (36.5)	0.37	227057 (44.0)	-	0.53
≥3 to ≤30 mg/mmol	-	-	-	927 (28.1)	12562 (30.5)	0.05	114628 (22.2)	-	0.14
>30 mg/mmol	-	-	-	1712 (51.8)	10631 (25.8)	0.55	27340 (5.3)	-	1.20
Medications – n (%)									
RAS inhibitor	2117 (98.4)	11516 (100)	0.18	2831 (85.7)	41209 (100)	0.58	233175 (45.1)	1.47	0.94
ACE inhibitor	673 (31.3)	7060 (61.3)	0.63	-	24426 (59.3)	-	146789 (28.4)	0.06	-
ARB	1444 (67.1)	4561 (39.6)	0.57	-	16783 (40.7)	-	87641 (17.0)	1.18	-
Diuretic	928 (43.1)	4169 (36.2)	0.14	1362 (41.2)	17844 (43.3)	0.04	117887 (22.8)	0.44	0.40
Statin	1395 (64.8)	8668 (75.3)	0.23	2190 (66.3)	28837 (70.0)	0.08	256396 (49.6)	0.31	0.34
SGLT2 inhibitor	2152 (100)	2063 (17.9)	3.03	3304 (100)	4745 (11.5)	3.92	29718 (5.8)	5.70	5.70

Plus-minus values are means ± standard deviations. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. \* Denotes comparison of the total CKD cohort with patients enrolled in the DAPA-CKD trial. † Denotes comparison of the total CKD cohort with patients enrolled in the EMPA-KIDNEY trial. We defined cardiovascular disease according to the definitions used in the DAPA-CKD and EMPA-KIDNEY studies. In DAPA-CKD it included a history of peripheral artery disease, angina pectoris, myocardial infarction, percutaneous coronary intervention, coronary-artery bypass grafting, heart failure, valvular heart disease, abdominal aorta aneurysm, atrial fibrillation, atrial flutter, ischemic stroke, transient ischemic attack, and haemorrhagic stroke. In EMPA-KIDNEY it included a history of myocardial infarction, heart failure, stroke, transient ischemic attack, or peripheral arterial disease. ACE inhibitor – angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor, ARB – angiotensin receptor blocker, CKD – chronic kidney disease, DAPA-CKD – Dapagliflozin and Renal Outcomes and Cardiovascular Mortality in Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease, eGFR – estimated glomerular filtration rate, EMPA-KIDNEY –

Study of Heart and Kidney Protection with Empagliflozin, HbA1c — glycosylated haemoglobin, IQR — interquartile range, RAS inhibitor — renin-angiotensin system inhibitor, SGLT2 inhibitor — sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 inhibitor, st. diff. — standardised difference, urine ACR — urine albumin-creatinine-ratio.

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Plus-minus values are means  $\pm$  standard deviations. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. \*Denotes comparison of the trial eligible CKD-T2D cohort with patients enrolled in the CREDENCE trial. ¶ Denotes comparison of the total CKD-T2D cohort with patients enrolled in the CREDENCE trial. We defined cardiovascular disease according to the definitions used in the CANVAS study and it included a history of ischaemic heart disease, stroke, or peripheral arterial disease. ACE inhibitor – angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor, ARB – angiotensin receptor blocker, CKD – chronic kidney disease, CREDENCE – Canagliflozin and Renal Events in Diabetes with Established Nephropathy Clinical Evaluation, eGFR – estimated glomerular filtration rate, HbA1c – glycated haemoglobin, IQR – interquartile range, RAS inhibitor – renin-angiotensin system inhibitor, SGLT2 inhibitor – sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 inhibitor, st. diff. – standardised difference, T2D – type 2 diabetes, urine ACR – urine albumin-creatinine-ratio.

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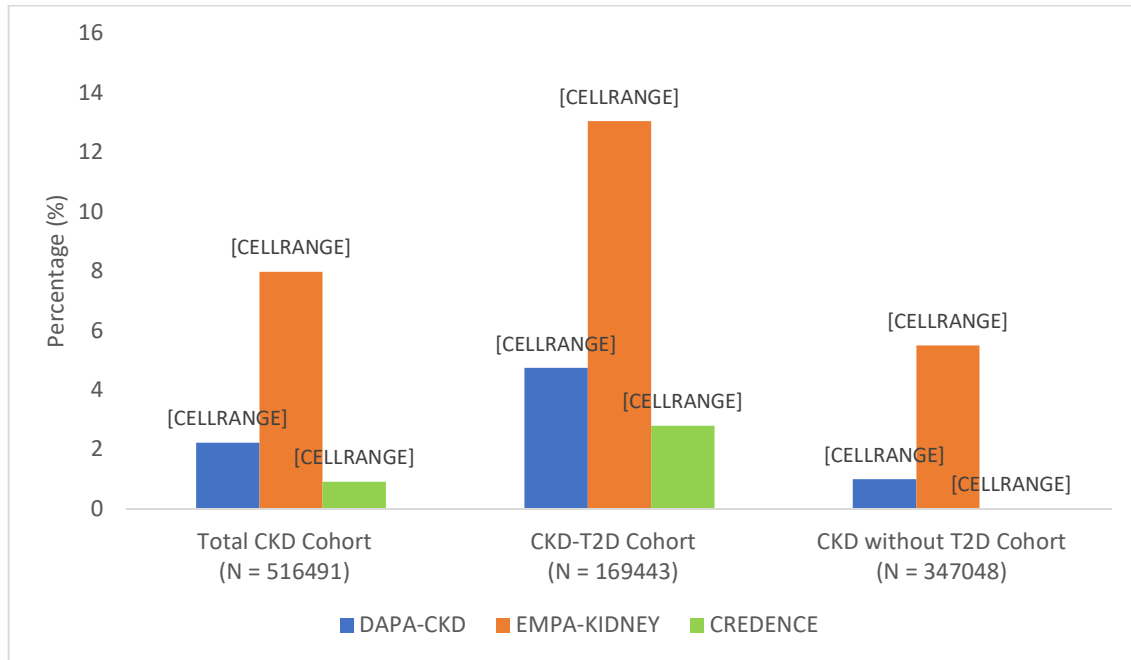


Medications									
Statin	1.55	1.485 – 1.627	<0.001	1.48	1.449 – 1.519	<0.001	1.96	1.802 – 2.125	<0.001
Diuretic	1.22	1.169 – 1.275	<0.001	1.56	1.525 – 1.598	<0.001	1.19	1.118 – 1.277	<0.001

BMI — body mass index, CI — confidence interval, CMMS — Cambridge multi morbidity score, CREDENCE — Canagliflozin and Renal Events in Diabetes with Established Nephropathy Clinical Evaluation, CVD — cardiovascular disease, DAPA-CKD — Dapagliflozin and Renal Outcomes and Cardiovascular Mortality in Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease, EMPA-KIDNEY — Study of Heart and Kidney Protection with Empagliflozin, IMD — index of multiple deprivation, OR — odds ratio.

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**Figure 1:** Proportion of Patients Eligible for Each SGLT2 Inhibitor Kidney Outcome Trial for the Total CKD Cohort and Stratified by Type 2 Diabetes Status; Primary Analysis.



Proportion of CKD population eligible for each of the SGLT2 inhibitor kidney outcome trials for the total CKD cohort and stratified by T2D status. The blue represents the CKD population eligible for the DAPA-CKD study. The red represents the CKD population eligible for the EMPA-KIDNEY study. The green represents the CKD population eligible for the CRENDENCE study. N refers to the total number of people in the cohort. CKD — chronic kidney disease, CRENDENCE — Canagliflozin and Renal Events in Diabetes with Established Nephropathy Clinical Evaluation, DAPA-CKD — Dapagliflozin and Renal Outcomes and Cardiovascular Mortality in Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease, EMPA-KIDNEY — Study of Heart and Kidney Protection with Empagliflozin, T2D — type 2 diabetes.

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