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Abstract:

Vascular access is the commonest invasive procedure in secondary care. Vascular access is understood as being access to the bloodstream of acute and chronic patients for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes such as blood sampling, vessel pressure monitoring, fluid infusions (blood transfusions, parenteral nutrition), pharmacological treatments (e.g. antibiotic therapies, chemotherapy, analgesic therapies) or apheresis/dialysis through catheters that may remain in the vessels for weeks or months. There is a wide variety of options available for venous access. Device selection for venous access must be adapted to the patient’s needs, and to the type, duration and frequency of the infusion. The scenario is rapidly evolving and hence treatments such as cancer chemotherapy, total parenteral nutrition, long-term parenteral antimicrobial therapies are increasing not only in hospitalized patients, but also in contexts other than traditional ones, such as local care, in response to needs related to healthcare expenditure or patients’ needs. This paper originates from the idea of a multidisciplinary group of experts to analyze the main, most recent international guidelines and recommendations on vascular access and to evaluate its implementation in Italy. It often happens that documents acquired in different contexts, however extraordinarily effective and
exhaustive, are difficult to apply in contexts where the healthcare organization, professional resources, communication dynamics and regulations are different. The consequence is a progressive departure from international standards and evidence-based medicine, which is particularly burdensome in sectors (such as vascular access and devices used for access) where technological innovation requires constant updating, alignment and method sharing. The work motivation of this group of authors, which sees its final finding in the welfare standards and criteria of appropriateness contained in this document, lies in the particular ongoing and future Italian epidemiological scenario and in the assessments of health economics that demand conscious and appropriate decisions in the interest of the citizen and the healthcare system. The vascular access field is undergoing a veritable revolution; once upon a time the leading lights were those who possessed the best technical skills, the best manual skills, whereas nowadays vascular access decisions are strategic decisions involving specially trained health professionals, able to assess complex interactions and work in teams. There is a strong cultural need, not only with regard to technical aspects, but also for the execution of procedures in daily clinical practice that comply with the recommendations set out in the guidelines published and elaborated by public and private bodies and institutions, as well as by scientific societies and recognized technical and scientific associations. This document is not a manual on vascular access for consultation by all those who intend to go deeper into operating aspects (selection of the device, implantation and management), but a reflection on the most recent pointers in the field of vascular access within Italy’s complex healthcare situation.

Reference:


doi: 10.23736/S0026-4806.18.05552-0.