
Abstract:

PURPOSE: Subcutaneous central venous port catheters (SCVPC) are of great importance in the treatment of patients with malignancies since they provide secure vascular access. Our aim was to assess the impact of long-term catheter care frequency on the frequency of port-related complications.

PATIENTS AND METHODS: Two hundred and seven patients who had not been on active chemotherapy through their SCVPC for at least 3 months were enrolled into the study. Those who received catheter care every 3 months or more frequently were assigned to the frequent care group, and the others to the infrequent care group. The patients were examined for port-related complications and thrombosis including port occlusion. Routinely in our clinic, catheter care was done by using 300 IU of heparin.

RESULTS: According to the frequency of SCVPC care, 49 (23.7 %) patients were in the frequent care group and 158 (76.3 %) were in the infrequent care group. Median follow-up of all patients was 671 days (range 133-1712). Median frequency of port care in the frequent care group was 90 days (range 30-90), but 441.5 days in the infrequent care group (range...
91-1630). None of the patients experienced port-related severe complications during the follow-up time. None of them presented with port occlusion. When the groups were analysed for thrombus (symptomatic and asymptomatic), there was no statistically significant difference (6.4 vs 13.8 %, p = 0.17). Those patients who had received more than first-line chemotherapy were found to have more thrombi than the patients who were treated with only one type of chemotherapy protocol (28.6 vs 10.2 %, p = 0.01), and the patients who had metastatic disease at the last control were found out to have thrombi more frequently than the non-metastatic patients (24.3 vs 9.3 %) (p = 0.01).

CONCLUSIONS: In the present study, there was no difference in port-related severe complications between frequent and infrequent care groups during follow-up. However, the rate of thrombosis was slightly higher in the infrequent port care group.