Abstract:

Phlebitis and cellulitis are commonly encountered problems in oncology patients receiving chemotherapy through peripherally inserted intravenous catheters. Use of central venous access devices (CVAD) is desirable. We have seen a steady increase in the use of CVADs in our oncology service with frequent use of indwelling ports, particularly during the last 2 years. In this study we have attempted to elucidate advantages of CVAD and compared them to peripheral catheters. This is a retrospective study with chart review of all oncology patients admitted in our oncology service at the Aga Khan University Hospital from March 2003 to March 2005. A survey was also conducted from a randomly selected sample of parents of children with cancer to elicit parental views regarding their choice of a particular catheter. Catheter-related infections were quite common (over 50%) in patients with peripheral lines, resulting in increased costs and prolonged hospitalization. Externalized CVADs were found difficult to care for, carried a risk of being accidentally pulled out or punctured, and were deemed undesirable for older female patients for cosmetic reasons. We found that the internalized CVADs (portacath) were superior to the externalized or peripheral lines and resulted in better patient and family satisfaction. Use of peripheral lines must be gradually phased out of pediatric oncology practice in Pakistan. Indwelling CVADs have become the standard of care internationally and should be considered for most patients in
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