
Abstract:

The clinical and research debate on the peripheral intravascular (PIV) catheter length of stay in situ is ongoing. The principal aim of this study was to explore the factors behind a nurse’s decision to leave a PIV in place for more than 96 hours. The study focused on 7 northern Italian hospitals in 2009. A consequent sample of 269 PIV catheters was included. Direct observation and interviews were adopted. The time of the expected PIV replacement was fixed at 96 hours after its positioning, in accordance with the international guideline. Several factors were taken into account in regard to replacement of the PIV catheters by nurses, ranging from analysis based on their own clinical experience with PIV complications and analysis of the patient’s clinical situation to the critical analysis of their own work situation. This clinical decision-making process is valuable: leaving the PIV in place for more than 96 hours is a complex decision and not simply a guideline violation.