Abstract:

Use of the peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) has gained popularity over the past 30 years in the USA and over the past 15 years in the UK. The PICC was initially used for specific purposes, such as the delivery of parenteral nutrition and chemotherapy, but its use has expanded both within the acute hospital and community settings. This article describes an ultrasound-guided PICC insertion service that has been set up in a district general hospital to expand the service within the oncology department and to begin a service for non-oncology patients. As expected, patients who have benefited from the development of this service include those requiring parenteral nutrition, chemotherapy and intravenous therapy in the community. However, retrospective audit has shown that the largest group of patients to benefit from the ultrasound-guided PICC insertion service was those with difficult venous access for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons are discussed, along with an overview of the benefits the service has provided to other groups of patients, and associated benefits to the hospital trust.