Evidence-Based Hemodialysis Catheter Care: The Journey to Standardization

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Hemodialysis catheter care prior to accessing and de-accessing the catheter is crucial to decreasing infection. It was noted on the dialysis unit at an academic, community Magnet hospital that there were inconsistencies in hemodialysis catheter care. These inconsistencies were also noted on other units throughout the organization caring for dialysis patients.

The Education Council on the hemodialysis unit was challenged with identifying the best practice for hemodialysis catheter care and educating staff throughout the network of this standard of care. A search for evidence based practice guidelines was conducted and supported the need for standardization of catheter care. Council members discussed catheter care with various catheter companies to assure compatibility of antiseptic agents and catheter materials. In addition, council members increased their knowledge base of antimicrobial agents utilized to disinfect central venous catheters to assure compatibility with hemodialysis catheters.

Council members revised the current hemodialysis catheter care policy to reflect best practice for accessing and de-accessing the catheter prior to manipulation. A chart was developed to assure that catheter care is compatible to the catheter material. Staffs on the hemodialysis unit and throughout the network were educated utilizing the network’s computerized eLearning system, inclusive of a pre and post test. In addition, staff had to demonstrate knowledge and skill via a competency checklist.

A standard of care for accessing and de-accessing a hemodialysis catheter based on evidence will decrease intravascular catheter related infections. This offering will detail the evidence search and resulting policy change to standardize hemodialysis catheter care utilized by staff on an acute care hemodialysis unit.

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