



Awareness of Peripheral Intravenous Catheters among Nurses and Physicians

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Purpose

Over 70% of hospitalised patients have a peripheral intravenous catheter (PIVC). However, up to 50% are not promptly removed at completion of IV treatment, placing patients at risk of complications including local and systemic infection. The study purpose was to determine the level of PIVC awareness among medical staff, registered nurses and nursing students.

Methods

Face-to-face interviews with patients and their treating RBWH medical and nursing teams. After verbal consent patients were asked if they had a PIVC, its location and when it was inserted, which was then confirmed by the research nurse. On the same day, the treating healthcare providers were similarly asked PIVC details about their patients.



Results

Of 188 staff assessments in 126 patients, 88% (n=166) of staff correctly identified the presence of a PIVC. This was accurate in 92% (n=122) of nurses, 100% (n=6) of nursing students and 76% (n=38) of medical staff. The side (left/right) of insertion was correct for 82% (n=45) of nurses, 50% of nursing students (n=3) and 37% of medical staff (n=7). The insertion site was accurately recalled by 32 (58%) nurses and 6 (32%) medical staff, and date of insertion by 38 (68%) nurses and 8 (80%) medical staff.

Conclusions

Initiatives targeted at increasing PIVC awareness should be aimed at medical staff, since one quarter were unaware their patient had a PIVC. The results suggest that nursing staff, who have high levels of awareness of patients' PIVC status, should play a greater role in initiating PIVC removal.