

Safer Practice Notice

Date: May 2019

Topic: Non-dialysis use of Central Line/Fistula Access in Hemodialysis patients

Situation:

- There have been two (2) recent incidents of non-dialysis staff accessing fistulas and central lines for non-dialysis purposes; one where an IV was started in the same arm as a fistula and the second where a staff member took a blood pressure in the same arm as a fistula.
- The patient confirmed that he told the staff member that it was his fistula arm and they continued to use anyway.

Background:

- All hemodialysis patients have an access site which is the route or pathway to the patient's circulatory system to connect to a dialysis machine to complete their dialysis treatments.
- The site can be via a central line access in the neck or femoral vein or via an arteriovenous fistula in the pt's arm. This is the only access used to complete the dialysis and it is the patient's life line.
- Because there is the risk of severe bleeding, aneurysms, infection, clots, air embolism (with central lines), only certified hemodialysis staff are permitted to use these access sites.
- No blood pressures, IVs or venipunctures should be performed in the same arm as the dialysis fistula.

Assessment:

- All patients are educated on the care of their access and are encouraged to advocate for their safety against the non-dialysis use of access sites when they visit the Emergency Department or are undergoing procedures.
- Patients carry a wallet card that explains what type of access they have and procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.
- This notice is to increase awareness of the purpose and dangers associated with using a hemodialysis patient's access by other health care professionals.

Recommendation:

- **Dialysis access sites are solely for the purpose of dialysis treatment. Using the access for any other purpose puts the patient's well being and safety at risk.**
- All staff should be reminded that there is to be no blood pressures, IVs or venipunctures performed in the same arm as the dialysis fistula.
- The Provincial Renal Clinic and Hemodialysis sites will continue to educate patients re: care of their access.
- Ensure all patients have up to date wallet cards.
- Access sites may be used in a code or life threatening situation.

Safer Practice Notices are issued by the Quality and Patient Safety Division of Health PEI to communicate recommended changes as a result of events that have been reported and investigated through the Provincial Safety Management System (PSMS).

For more information please contact:

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