REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT

Preventing CAUTIs

A CPD article improved Lucy Ward’s knowledge of catheter-associated urinary tract infections

What was the nature of the CPD activity, practice-related feedback and/or event and/or experience in your practice?
The article discussed the symptoms of catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs), the risks associated with catheter use and how to manage catheters safely.

What did you learn from the CPD activity, feedback and/or event and/or experience in your practice?
The CPD article explained that the main risk factor for developing a urinary tract infection is having a urethral catheter in situ, because this interferes with the natural flushing action of urine that eliminates bacteria from a healthy bladder.

The article discussed the patient risks associated with long-term catheterisation, such as encrustation, blockage, leakage, pain and discomfort. By monitoring the pH of patients with long-term catheters, it is possible to identify those with unusually alkaline urine, and therefore monitor for early signs of encrustation.

I was interested to learn that bacteria appear in the urine 24-48 hours after the catheter has been inserted. However, having bacteria in the urine does not necessarily cause problems and half of all patients with an indwelling urethral catheter do not experience any symptoms of an infection.

I have also learned about Tiemann tip catheters, which have a curved tip to make catheterisation easier for patients with an enlarged prostate gland.

How did you change or improve your practice?
I work on a ward for men aged 80 years and over, who may be at increased risk of developing a CAUTI. I plan to consider ways to improve the documentation of urinalysis results, and I intend to develop a sticker for use in patients’ medical notes. This will include the reason why the urine sample was taken, a list of the possible results, and what was done with the results – for example, whether the catheter was changed or flushed. This will help to identify patients with unusually alkaline urine, thus identifying early signs of encrustation so that it can be treated.

The article emphasised the importance of patient education in relation to catheterisation. In my practice, patients are given a ‘catheter pack’ to take

Write your own reflective account
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Complete the four questions about the CPD article you have just read, writing about 800 words in total. Details of how to submit your reflective account are available at: journals.rcni.com/reflective-account.
PATIENT VIEW

Our community nurse supports the whole family through tough times

Christina Vazquez explains the difference that Rosie Mulholland has made to their lives – especially for her daughter Emily

Children’s community nurse Rosie Mulholland has always gone above and beyond her duty to make my daughter Emily’s life, and the whole family’s, easier.

Five-year-old Emily has Dandy-Walker Syndrome. She has global development delay, is peg fed and cannot walk, talk or sit up.

Having a daughter with such needs can be very scary and at times you can feel very alone, but I know that Rosie is there for us any time day or night for anything we need. I have never met anyone so selfless.

We are not her only family, but she still finds so much time for us, and so often in her own time.

I cannot drive so Rosie has driven me and Emily to hospital appointments when there was no transport available. Once Emily was taken ill at the children’s hospice so Rosie drove miles to pick me up and take me to hospital to be with my daughter.

Going above and beyond

Rosie doggedly helped push forward our application for a suitable home for the family. She came to appointments with me, ringing housing executives all the time and met with politicians to ask for their support.

And when I moved she turned up with her children to help as I don’t have any family nearby that could help out. Then, that first night, she bought us all tea at the chip shop. These little things mean so much.

She regularly comes to our house to assess Emily’s needs, and makes time to listen to our problems and worries and answer our questions. Two years ago I split from my husband and I would have been lost without Rosie.

She arranged for me to have counselling and go to support meetings and regularly called to see if I was okay. When Emily was born my son was only 3 and he struggled because I was at the hospital frequently, Rosie got in touch with a support group for help with him too.

She has supported me and my family so much in the past few years.

How is this relevant to the Code?

Select one or more themes:

- Prioritise people, Practise effectively, Preserve safety, Promote professionalism and trust

One of the themes of The Code is preserving safety. The article discussed the procedure for safe urethral catheterisation and how to manage catheters safely. It also recommended that the use of indwelling catheter is avoided unless there is no alternative, and it should be removed as soon as possible.

Another theme is prioritising people, the article discussed ways of preserving the dignity and privacy of patients with an indwelling catheter.

Lucy Ward is a sister at Southampton University Hospital, Southampton

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