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Guidelines for the Prevention of Intravascular Catheter-Related Infections

Background

Intravascular catheters are indispensable in modern-day medical practice, particularly in intensive care units (ICUs). Although such catheters provide necessary vascular access, their use puts patients at risk for local and systematic infectious complications, including local site infection, CRBSI, septic thrombophlebitis, endocarditis, and other metastatic infections (e.g., lung abscess, brain abscess, osteomyelitis, and endophthalmitis)...

Costs

...The attributable cost per infection is an estimated \$34,508--\$56,000 and the annual cost of caring for patients with CVC-associated BSIs ranges from \$296 million to \$2.3 billion.

An analysis by Kluger and Maki has suggested that a total of 250,000 cases of CVC-associated BSIs occur annually if one assesses the entire hospital rather than focusing exclusively on the ICU. They estimated 12-25% attributable mortality for each infection and a marginal cost to the healthcare system of \$25,000 per episode...

Protection

...Do not submerge the catheter under water. Showering should be permitted if precautions can be taken to reduce the likelihood of introducing organisms into the catheter (e.g., if the catheter and connecting device are protected with an impermeable cover during the shower).

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(Excerpts from a 36 page report published by the Centers for Disease Control)