
Letter to the editor

COVID-19 in Dialysis Patients: An Unexpected Silver Lining?

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Dear Editor,

In clinical practice, central venous catheter (CVC) use among hemodialysis patients is correlated with higher risk of infection compared to the use of an arteriovenous fistula. In fact, it is 3 times higher compared to prosthetic grafts, and 10 times higher than native fistulas [1,2]. For these reasons, international guidelines recommend the use of arteriovenous fistulas over central venous catheterization [3].

Dialysis facilities all over the world have been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, registering several deaths among HD patients. Our country was no exception. As the nephrology department of a university hospital in the biggest city in Morocco, our unit used to admit numerous patients with bloodstream catheter-related infections. During this coronavirus pandemic, our department, as well as many others in the country, witnessed a substantial decrease in these infections, although we have no available data to support this affirmation.

Nevertheless, Heidempergher *et al.* [4] reported the same finding, with a 91% reduction in catheter-related bloodstream infections compared to the same period in

2019. This conclusion simply suggests that more rigorous hygiene precautions can decidedly ameliorate the issue of CVC-related infections in dialysis setting.

As the Covid-19 vaccination race continues worldwide, these striking results raise an important question: Will these strict hygienic precautions live on after the pandemic? In 2009, similar precautions were used in the flu pandemic, but were rapidly forgotten afterwards. Unfortunately, humanity has a short memory, and these measures will certainly fade away when the pandemic will be over.

Conflict of interest statement. None declared.

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