

Developing Good Practices in Teaching Self-cannulation : Scab Removal with Blunt Needle



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Up to 35% of all dialysis patients in the Northern Savonia Area at Kuopio University Hospital (KUH) have home care dialysis. Half of the home dialysis patients are undergoing home hemodialysis (HHD) treatment. The prevalence of HHD in KUH is growing, driven partly by improved patient well-being when they are performing self-care hemodialysis at home.

Most of HHD patients do treatments by themselves. Some of them started dialysis with a home district nurse, who place the needles into the patient's fistula, and the patient does the rest of the treatment by themselves. Since March 2011 HHD has been the treatment of choice for more than 55 patients.

Patients who do HHD believe that HHD offers better lifestyle benefits than the traditional in-center assisted, minimally assisted, or self-care hemodialysis or home peritoneal dialysis.

We use the buttonhole technique and cannulate in the exact same spot every time. We have used sharp needles to remove scabs, but we are now changing our practice to using blunt needles. Before changing our routines we read many articles about the benefits of using blunt needle and asked the opinions all of our hemodialysis patients and nurses.

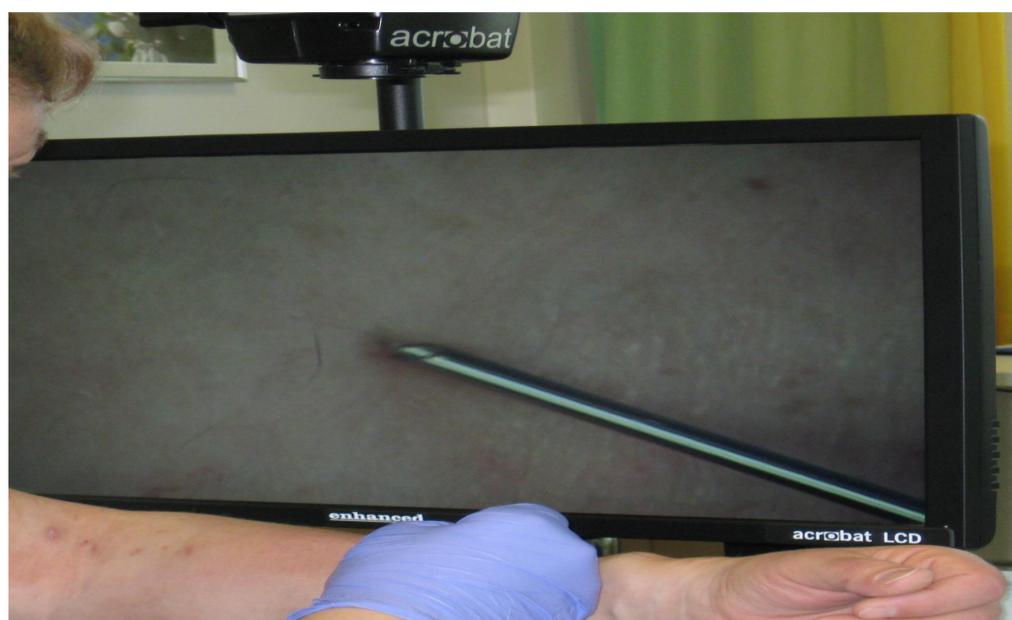


photo: Kirsi Boman, RN, Dialysis Ward, KUH

It is highly recommended that a blunt needle be used because the skin round the scab will stay healthier. An evidence-based approach to treatment and care is crucial for the development of nursing and dialysis practice and is important to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and equity of care. Our practice is now going better, but a large variation still exists between dialysis units in other hospitals and countries.