**EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN WHO ARE LIVING WITH A SKIN-TUNNELLED CATHETER OR A TOTALLY IMPLANTED PORT, WITH A FOCUS ON THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE**

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**Background:**

This study focuses on two types of central venous access devices (CVADs), skin-tunnelled catheters (STCs) and totally implanted ports (TIPs). In Irish hospitals, STCs are preferred over TIPs in contrast with international practice. The decision is made by the surgeon. Literature shows that TIPs have advantages over STCs such as of reduced rates of infection.

**Aim:**

The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of how the quality of life (QoL) of children is affected by having an STC or a TIP.

**Objectives:**

1. To explore the experiences of children living with a TIP or a STC.
2. To understand the impact of living with a TIP or an STC in the child’s QoL, comparing both groups.

**Method:**

This study employs a qualitative phenomenology descriptive method and semi-structured interviews were conducted on a purposeful sampling of 5 children with a broviac and 5 children with a portacath, aged 12 to 18 with a STC or a TIP.

Data was analysed with the use on NVivo and following the Colaizzi-Keen method. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee at CHI at Crumlin in June 2020.

**Preliminary findings:**

Preliminary findings show that patients with STCs had more episodes of infection and fear of dislodgement, as well as limitation in activities of daily living such as sports, playing and swimming/bathing. All families interviewed believed that it would have been beneficial to be provided with a choice of device at their surgical consultation, and majority of families with a STC reported that they would have chosen a TIP despite the needle access, while all families with a TIP would have kept the same device.

**Conclusion and Implications:**

Despite limitations, the findings of this study correspond with similar studies previously conducted around CVAD’s satisfaction. Portacaths had less issues reported, and it was highlighted that offering a choice of device could translate into increased QoL in the patient. The relevance of this study is that it could add to the body of literature the point of view of paediatric patients, where a gap was found.

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