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Reducing Infection Risks for Ultrasound-Guided Percutaneous Procedures Performed by ED Nurses

A roundtable discussion at the Emergency Nurses Association meeting will describe policies and procedures shown to reduce patient risks

HARTWELL, Georgia—At the upcoming [annual meeting of the Emergency Nurses Association](#), in San Diego, PICC Excellence CEO Nancy Moureau, PhD, RN, CRNI, CPUI, VA-BC, will lead a preconference session focused on aseptic techniques and disinfection strategies for ultrasound-guided percutaneous procedures.

Ultrasound technologies offer important advantages for procedures such as inserting central lines and peripheral catheters, improving outcomes while also reducing risks and healthcare costs. “Ultrasound guidance makes it possible to perform better assessments of veins and to visually guide the needle into the vessel,” Moureau explains. “That improves the success rate for insertions—especially for older patients with more comorbidities—helping to cut costs and staff time and to reduce waste.”

If not performed correctly, however, the use of ultrasound technologies may create risks that can lead to serious bloodstream infections. “Skin bacteria cause 60% of central-line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSIs),” says Moureau. “If aseptic technique is not maintained, bacterial contamination can colonize the insertion site, insertion track, the catheter and bloodstream.”

Ultrasound coupling gel is another key source of infection risk, which can occur when non-sterile or contaminated gel is allowed to contact the skin. The gel can also be difficult to clean up and can make it harder for dressings to stick, increasing the chances of dressing failure.

As a solution to such issues, Moureau’s presentation will explain the principles and practice of [Aseptic Non-Touch Technique \(ANTT\)](#), a fast, safe, and cost-effective process that has been widely adopted across Europe to guide general asepsis or surgical critical sterile practices.

Moureau’s presentation will also discuss techniques for taking advantage of the benefits of ultrasound guidance while reducing potential risks. One novel idea is using a sterile barrier

between the skin and the gel and transducer, which reduces both infection risk and the level of disinfection needed for the ultrasound transducer. Another is having a standardized and complete IV start kit or central line insertion kit that clinicians can grab and use at a moment's notice.

The session will also examine current policies and practices for cleaning and disinfecting ultrasound transducers.

For the preconference session, Moureau will be joined by Tiffany Wiksten, DNP, RN, CIC, associate director for the standards interpretation group in the division of healthcare improvement at [The Joint Commission](#), who will describe how the commission's surveyors score hospital practices related to transducer use and disinfection.

Following the opening presentations, Moureau will moderate a roundtable discussion with Wiksten and others.

"This session will offer important policy background and practical techniques for emergency nurses who are called upon to perform these types of percutaneous procedures," says Moureau. "The principles and procedures we will discuss can help to make a real difference for both nurses and their patients."

The preconference session "An End-to-End Approach to Infection Control for Ultrasound-Guided Percutaneous Procedures" will be presented on Thursday, September 21, from 12:30 to 2:00 pm at the San Diego Convention Center. Session registration is required, and the presentations are free of charge.

About Dr. Nancy Moureau and PICC Excellence

Nancy Moureau, RN, PhD, CRNI, CPUI, VA-BC, is the owner and CEO of PICC Excellence, a vascular access education company that provides effective, easy-to-understand in-person on-site training and web-based online education for clinicians worldwide. A new [Ultrasound UGPIV Mastery Learning Certificate Training program](#), released by PICC Excellence, has received national attention.

Recognized as an international expert in vascular access, Moureau is widely published in the [medical literature](#), including recent [guidelines](#) that define appropriate indications for the insertion, maintenance, and care of peripherally inserted central catheters (PICCs). She is also a member of the Alliance for Vascular Access Teaching and Research (AVATAR), based in Australia.

For more information about PICC Excellence, visit www.piccexcellence.com.

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