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Kidney Disease Treatment May Harm Patients

Central venous catheters are commonly used to provide permanent hemodialysis for patients with serious kidney disease. One technique, inserting a catheter through large vessels, has been commonly used worldwide in recent years. A new study published in Hemodialysis International finds that this treatment may block the blood flow in the vessel, leading to superior vena cava syndrome (SVC syndrome), a highly serious complication caused by the obstruction of blood coming to the heart from the upper body.

The warning signs of SVC syndrome include shortness of breath, swelling of the upper limbs, neck and face, which occur as the catheter, generally inserted into a large blood vessel, blocks blood flow. The study stresses the need for clinicians to be able to identify SVC syndrome symptoms in order to prevent more serious complications.

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