
**Abstract**
An interpretive descriptive design was used to explore the experiences of patients on hemodialysis who had utilized and transitioned from a central venous catheter (CVC) to an arteriovenous fistula (AVF). Eleven patients participated in semi-structured interviews that were analyzed using constant comparison. Within the larger context of living with end stage renal disease, participants described their vascular access experiences according to three main themes: impact, coping, and influencing factors. Accesses had physical, psychosocial, and lifestyle-related impacts that participants coped with primarily by exercising control and gradually accepting, and were influenced by education, trust in healthcare providers, and family. Findings revealed a cumulative burden for many participants with AVF and the need to improve the patient experience of vascular accesses especially for those living in rural communities.