Buttonhole Cannulation: Current Prospects and Challenges
Contributions to Nephrology

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Over 40 years have passed since Dr. Zbylut J. Twardowski, a Polish nephrologist, discovered the buttonhole method for the cannulation of the arteriovenous fistula. It was a serendipitous discovery but was soon adopted due to its obvious benefits of decreased puncture pain and extension of the life of the arteriovenous fistula. After about 30 years, this method has recently been the subject of intense scrutiny following reports of higher incidence rates of access-related infections.

Recent research has highlighted the mechanism of buttonhole access-related infections. Interest has also grown in newer techniques related to this method that may have important bearing on the future use of this method. We feel that all such recent research needs to be presented to the scientific community in an easily accessible and readily available format. We hope that this book will foster further scientific inquiry in the medical community about this very important access cannulation technique. Further work in the area of buttonhole-related infections would eventually benefit the patient, without which all research loses its meaning.

In brief, this book is a collection of all relevant information including history, benefits and the latest research related to the buttonhole cannulation method. Despite our best efforts, we could not collect all the relevant work in this field for reasons beyond our control. However, the articles presented in this volume do provide enough material to the reader to achieve two primary objectives: (1) to rekindle an awareness of the advantages of the buttonhole cannulation method and (2) to encourage a critical analysis of possible techniques to overcome current barriers that prevent a wider uptake of this method of cannulation worldwide.

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