

Parental Anxiety of Hospitalized Children -Pediatric Nurses Concern

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Abstract

Parental anxiety when their children are hospitalized is a common and understandable concern. Pediatric nurses play a crucial role in addressing and alleviating this anxiety. Here are some aspects to consider. Pediatric nurses are sensitive to the needs of parents related to child's hospitalization; they play a pivotal role in the management of the hospitalized child as well the psychological concerns of the parents. Periodical sessions as part of Inservice education and audits on parental anxiety will enable the nurses to be aware of the psychological status of parents and promote their wellbeing.

Keywords: anxiety; hospitalization; parents; stress

Introduction:

The importance for children's psychosocial wellbeing of parental proximity and involvement in the care of their hospitalised children has been recognised for many years, with recommendations for daily hospital visiting by mothers being made in the 1940s (Davies, 2010). However, it was not until the findings of the Platt Committee in 1959 (Ministry of Health, 1959), that the issue gained significant prominence, recommending that: "parents should be allowed to visit whenever they can, and to help as much as possible with the care of the child". A recent systematic review (Power and Franck, 2008) confirmed previous findings of parents' desire and expectations to participate in their child's care and showed how the nature of their participation has evolved. Other research has also confirmed the importance of parental presence from the child's viewpoint (Franck et al., 2008). In terms of parental adjustment, parents of very ill children, such as neonates (Shaw et al., 2006) and children in intensive care (Balluffi et al., 2004; Colville et al., 2009; Needle et al., 2009), or children undergoing specific surgical procedures (Franck et al., 2010; Lamontagne et al., 2003) have high levels of stress.

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Nurses Role in allaying fear and anxiety of parents due to child's hospitalization:

Communication: Clear Information: Provide clear and honest information about the child's condition, treatment plan, and expected outcomes. Transparency can help build trust and reduce uncertainty. Regular Updates: Maintain regular communication with parents, keeping them informed about any changes in the child's condition or treatment. Scheduled updates can help manage expectations.

Empathy and Emotional Support: Acknowledge Feelings: Recognize and validate the parents' feelings of anxiety and stress. Understanding their emotions can help in providing more targeted support. Emotional Support: Offer emotional support through active listening, empathy, and encouragement. Sometimes, parents need someone to talk to and express their concerns.

Family-Centered Care: Involvement in Care: Involve parents in the care of their child as much as possible. This can include simple tasks, like assisting with daily activities, and it helps parents feel more connected and in control.

Education: Patient Education: Provide parents with clear and understandable information about their child's condition, treatment, and any necessary procedures. Knowledge can empower parents and reduce anxiety.

Hospital Resources: Familiarize parents with hospital resources, such as support groups, counseling services, and educational materials. Knowing where to find additional help can be reassuring.

Create a Comfortable Environment: Welcoming Atmosphere: Foster a welcoming and supportive environment within the pediatric unit. This

includes creating spaces where parents can spend time with their child comfortably.

Collaboration with Other Healthcare Professionals: Multidisciplinary Approach: Work collaboratively with other healthcare professionals, including social workers, child life specialists, and psychologists. A multidisciplinary approach can address various aspects of the family's needs.

Preparation for Discharge: Discharge Planning: Involve parents in the discharge planning process from the early stages. Providing clear instructions for post-hospital care can help alleviate anxiety about the transition home.

Addressing Cultural and Religious Needs: Cultural Competence: Be sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of the family. Understanding and respecting their beliefs can contribute to a more supportive and comfortable experience.

Technology and Remote Communication: Making virtual visits and giving advice to parents and family members to allay anxiety and fears related to child's hospitalization.

Conclusion: Parents of hospitalized children undergo lot of trauma and challenges due to child's condition, change in the daily routines, financial burdens, fear of unknown, social stigma etc and parents need to ventilate their fear and anxiety, nurses being with them will be able to better understand their struggles and can empathize with them and take measures

to allay their fear and anxiety so that both the child and parents will have a better hospital experience.

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