Parental Presence During Pediatric Care

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BACKGROUND

As nursing students interested in a career in pediatric nursing, we wanted to understand the implications and evidence-based research relating to parental presence during children’s invasive procedures and how it corresponds to safe nursing practice and improved patient-parent satisfaction. Our initial thoughts on this topic mimicked the same reservations expressed by clinicians. These included the possibility of parental interference, clinician distraction and increased parental stress due to confusion about the planned procedure. We chose this area of interest after speaking with parents who wanted opportunities to do more for their chronically ill child. For example, one group member had the opportunity to interview a parent about their desire to be present during a procedure for their child with cancer. The child was going to have a bone marrow procedure, and the parent wanted to be present to spend every moment possible with their child. This experience was inspiring and made her wonder if there are or should be protocols set in place for circumstances like this.

The topic is a priority because many hospitals do not have a written policy that states the level of involvement allowed for parents or visitors. This results in confusion and, many times, parents simply being shut out of procedures because the clinicians were unclear of the official rules and policies. The lack of official policy leads to different rules for different floors and even different clinicians and nurses. This results in increased parental stress and frustration and decreased parental satisfaction. This is a burden between the clinician and parent. With increased education to the families provided by hospitals, there will be better “smoothness” to patient care delivery, which leads to better safety measures and satisfaction to the staff, family members and, most importantly, the patient.

OBJECTIVE

During invasive procedures involving pediatric patients, how does parental presence compared with parental absence affect the emotional state of the parent?

METHOD

We narrowed our search to focus primarily on the parent’s feelings.

- Our search criteria included the following terms: pediatric presence, family presence, pediatrics, parent*, adolescent, family, famil*, invasive procedure, patient satisfaction, parent involvement, and nursing research.

- We only included studies that compared parental presence versus absence with a focus on patient outcomes.

- Databases we searched included Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Medline, PubMed, Google Scholar, PsychInfo, and Conference Databases.

- We looked for different types of articles, such as randomized controlled trials, literature reviews and qualitative and quantitative studies published within the last 5 years.

- The research articles we found complement each other, used similar themes and drew to describe parental feelings, and supported the main themes.

- All articles found supported the main theme; none presented any contradictory evidence.

RESULTS

For parents, choice equals to higher satisfaction levels with their child’s care (Curley, 2015).

According to Wild et al. (2012) hospitals are embracing parental presence and are striving to make it an important element in their clinical practice. Written guidelines are needed and should include:

1. The use of a trained parent liaison or facilitator
2. Written policy
3. Increased education for nursing and other staff

Parental presence during invasive procedures has a positive impact on patient outcomes, parent satisfaction and clinician’s comfort level with present parents.

STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE

Based on our findings, we feel there is enough evidence to change practice. The level of evidence is moderate. Included in our literature review were:

- Type of article
- Number of articles used
- Level of evidence

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of article</th>
<th>Number of articles used</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reports of expert consensus</td>
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BEST PRACTICES

Parent presence facilitation should have specialized training on parental preparation, support, and medical explanation.

Establish the facilitator before the patient’s arrival.

Facilitators should provide supportive care.

Plan for compliance.

Written policy.

RESOURCES

The use of a trained parent liaison or facilitator

- Written policy

- Increased education for nursing and other staff

- Parental presence during invasive procedures:

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- Parental involvement as an option and not a requirement or expectation and instances where family involvement is not an option (certain types of procedures, violent parents, uncooperative parents).

- Plan for compliance

- A rate of compliance less than 50% needs a plan for improvement.

- Resources available for developing a protocol for family presence include online resources, workshops, training sessions, handouts, educational slides and simulations.

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