

Effectiveness of Therapeutic Play for the Hospital Preparation Program among Preschoolers

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Abstract: hospitalization can be disturbing experience for young children because of their lack of self-esteem, their dependence on others and limited experience with the medical system. This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic play in preparing child for hospitalization in order to reduce the impact of hospital anxiety on their behavior. The investigator conducted study among 60 hospitalized preschoolers of selected pediatric hospitals in Coimbatore district, Tamilnadu, India. Convenience sampling technique was adopted to divide the study participants into study and control group and the physiological parameters, preschool anxiety was assessed using tool designed by the investigator. The result of the study indicate that therapeutic play can be a effective means of hospital preparation inorder to prevent negative impact of hospital anxiety on preschoolers.

Keywords: therapeutic play, preschoolers, hospital preparation program, anxiety.

1. INTRODUCTION

One out of every four children are said to be hospitalized before they reach age five. At least 60% of children will demonstrate signs of stress related anxiety during hospitalization although extreme emotional reactions to hospitalization are rare. Currently, it is clear that the use of play in the care of children is an indispensable ingredient in successfully implementing one of the current trends in pediatric nursing care: atraumatic care. This is a philosophy that incorporates interventions that eliminate or minimize the physical and psychological discomfort experienced by children and their families due to hospitalization. Therapeutic play facilitates self-expression and provides a mechanism for developing positive coping mechanisms. It provides opportunity to regain sense of autonomy and mastery.

A study was conducted on reduction of anxiety in children facing hospitalization and surgery by use of filmed modeling. Sixty children aged 4-12 years who are electively selected for surgeries like hernias, tonsillectomies, or urinary-genital tract difficulties were shown on hospital admission either a relevant peer modeling film of a child being hospitalized and receiving surgery or an unrelated control film. Both groups received extensive preparation by the hospital staff. State measures of anxiety, including the Hospital Fears Rating Scale, the Observer Rating Scale of Anxiety, and Palmar Sweat Index, revealed a significant reduction of preoperative (night before) and postoperative (3-4 wk post-surgery examination) fear arousal in the experimental as compared to the control group. The parents reported a significant post hospital increment in the frequency of behavior problems in the children who had not seen the modeling film (Melamed, et al., 2009).

2. OBJECTIVES

The study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness therapeutic play by means of differences in physiological parameters, anxiety scale among study and control groups of hospitalized preschoolers and also to associate the level of anxiety with the demographic variables.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Preschoolers age between 3-5 years who were hospitalized in selected pediatric hospitals of Coimbatore district, Tamilnadu, India have been included as study participants and convenience sampling technique was adopted to divide the group into study and control groups. Data collection tools such as preschool anxiety scale and physiological parameter (pulse, respiration, blood pressure) assessed to find out the significant difference prior and after therapeutic play intervention.

Preschool anxiety scale which used for data collection consisted of 20 items, rated on 5 point scale, 0-4. The scoring interpreted as mild, moderate, severe, profound state anxiety based on scores obtained by the participants

4. RESULTS

In the comparison of the anxiety scores, physiological parameters among hospitalized preschoolers, statistical analysis revealed that higher percentage values in prior intervention state which significantly declined in the after intervention state. Similarly 't' values of anxiety, physiological parameters such as pulse, respiration, blood pressure respectively 5.24,4.03, 4.81,1.96 which is equal and greater than table value of 1.96 at 5% level of significance which shown significant difference in anxiety and physiological parameters in study and control groups. Chi square test analysis revealed that there was no association between anxiety scores and demographic variables.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study had been supported by a series of other studies which confirmed that therapeutic play helps in reducing anxiety of hospitalized children. From the analysis and results, it is concluded that therapeutic play is an essential intervention to reduce anxiety in hospitalized preschoolers. It explores the recent concepts based on atraumatic care in child health nursing.

6. RECOMMENDATION

The necessary training program can be included for pediatric nurses to practice therapeutic play as routine care in the hospital set ups

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