THE EFFECT OF UNIT TOURS ON PEDIATRIC PATIENTS IN THE PERIOPERATIVE SETTING  
Primary Investigators: Debra Farmer, BSN, RN, CAPA, Ambulatory Surgical Center  
Lynda J. Dimitroff, PhD, MSEd, BSN, RN, MCHES,  
Department of Nursing Research & Evidence-Based Practice  
Rochester General Hospital, Rochester, NY

Introduction: Anxiety is a major problem for surgical patients during the perianesthesia period, especially pediatric patients and their families. Surgical pediatric patients are surrounded by potentially stressful events: separation from family, fear of the unknown, loss of control, unfamiliar faces, and fear of pain (Lazarus et al., 1974).

Identification of the problem: The surgical experience can be extremely stressful to children and their caregivers (Justus et al., 2006). Offering preoperative tours to children and their families may increase their sense of control and positively affect their overall perioperative experience.

Purpose: The purpose of the research was to explore the effect of unit tours on pediatric patients in the perioperative setting. The research question for this study is: What is the effect of unit tours on pediatric patients in the perioperative setting? Pediatric tours of the Ambulatory Surgical Center had not been conducted for ten years prior to the study. The tours implemented during the study were designed and conducted specifically for this study.

Method: Naturalistic inquiry and descriptive qualitative were used in this study. The sample included 30 children ages 7-11 who were scheduled for surgery through the Ambulatory Surgery Center at a 528-bed acute-care facility in New York, and their parents. The sample size of 30 children is appropriate for qualitative research. Children excluded from the study were those who had not participated in a tour prior to surgery; children whose surgery was canceled on day of surgery; children who were medicated prior to the interview; children who had an unplanned hospital admission; and any child with a medical history that would impact normal developmental stages. The primary investigator collected all of the data and was mentored through the process in a nursing research fellowship program and by the leader of the Department of Nursing Research. Data were collected through interviews with children, open-ended questionnaires with parents, participant observation, and clinical data. Data from interviews and questionnaires were analyzed using constant-comparative analysis to identify emergent themes. Participant observations and clinical data were utilized to add to the overall analysis.

Results: A preliminary review of the data suggests the emergence of several themes including: the child liked the tour and enjoyed seeing the surgical area; the child’s needs were met during the visit; the tour made the child more comfortable about the surgery and the parents calmer; and the overall experience was positive.

Discussion: The perioperative tours had a positive impact on both children and parents.
**Conclusions:** The tours allayed fears about the surgery, made the children comfortable, provided an opportunity to ask questions, and familiarized families with their surroundings.

**Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research:** The results would suggest the importance of unit tours for the pediatric patients and their parents. The results also add evidence-based information to the limited research in the current professional literature. Future research includes replicating the study with an expanded age group of children, and, examining other perioperative interventions that would benefit children and their parents.