

Rolling in Smiles:
The Implementation of a Pediatric Toy Cart in the Perianesthesia Care Setting
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Introduction: The waiting period prior to a surgical procedure is a time of high anxiety for children and their parents. There have been multiple studies over the years which quantified the magnitude of children's preoperative anxiety while waiting for a variety of elective surgeries. These studies have also found a positive correlation between pediatric anxiety with parental anxiety, surgical morbidity, post-operative pain and extended recoveries. Therefore, it is vital that preoperative strategies be utilized to assist in reducing pediatric anxiety.

Identification of the problem: Toys have been a proven method in pediatric settings to reduce anxiety. However, at the National Institute of Health Clinical Center, the operating room patient population has been largely adult focused with 85% of patients being over the age of 21 and 15% of patients under the age of 21 during the fiscal year. To date, there have been minimal methodologies in our current Perianesthesia practice focused on pediatric patients to assist in minimizing preoperative anxiety.

PICO: What is the impact of offering age-appropriate toys to pediatric patients compared to not providing any toys on alleviating preoperative anxiety during the waiting period before surgery?

Methods/Evidence: A literature review was conducted using CINAHL and PubMed in which seven studies were identified. In conjunction, a survey was conducted over a four-month period to gather quantitative and qualitative data from the patient's and their guardians.

Significant Findings/Outcomes: The results from the survey showed that in patients' who received a toy, 88% of guardians stated that their child was very happy. In addition, 94% felt that the toy helped to reduce their child's anxiety before their surgery. The qualitative data identified four major themes from the initiative such as the positive impact on mood and calming effect of the toys. Therefore, since the availability of toys in the pre-operative area, pediatric anxiety has significantly decreased and overall patient satisfaction has increased. An unexpected finding from the project was the increase in nurse/provider wellness and job satisfaction from being able to assist the children in picking out a toy.

Implications for Perianesthesia nurses: In conclusion, the presence of a pediatric toy cart in the preoperative area was found to be beneficial to the patients and improve overall patient satisfaction. Furthermore, the presence of a pediatric cart is a vital initiative in a pre-operative unit and Perianesthesia nursing practice.