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Nursing perception of the children hospitalized in a university hospital

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Abstract

The study was carried out in order to determine the nursing perception of children hospital patients between the ages 6-18.The descriptive cross-sectional study was realized between the dates of February 2013-Februaru 2014 with children hospital patients. No sample selection was made and a sample was created out of the 206 children who accepted to participate the study. The data collection was prepared in line with literature and expert opinion; and the data collecting form, consisting of children's socio-demographic characteristics and written and pictured questions about the nursing perception was used.51 % of the participating children were girls and their average of age was 12,22±3,22. 46,1 % of the children were hospital patients due to a chronic illness and 31,6 % mention that they have experienced hospitalization many times. When the children were asked about the responsibilities of the nurses; while 74,8 % gave the answer that they give an injection, 1,9 % responded that they play with us. When the perception of nurses shown to the children through facial expressions according to age groups were analysed; 68 % marked good-humoured, 25,2 % tired, 3,9 % sad and 2,9 % angry. In line with the findings of the study it was seen that the children percept the nurse as good-humoured and besides of that they are more interested in concrete interferences and rarely add play to care. In line with these results it can be recommended that the nurses increase and support applications regarding appropriate psychosocial care in order to decrease the stress of the hospitalized children due to the illness and treatment and to convert the crisis to a benefit.

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1. Introduction

Being hospitalized in a hospital affects the development of the children in a negative way and it may cause biological and psychosocial stress (Atay et al., 2011; Çavusoglu, 2009). The caregiver nurse at the hospital has a big impact on the hospitalization experience of the child. The child who is hospitalized has to face with the side effects of the treatment, invasive procedures and also the anxiety caused by being seperated from his/her friends while fighting the disease (Beytut et al., 2009). The nurse has big responsibilities during this process.

Child nurse should give a nursing care which aims to heal the child physically, spiritually, cognitively and socially. The nurse should know the physical, physiological and psychological characteristics and the perception process of the child are not fully developed. However, the nurse should also know that this is an ongoing developing process and the perception and reaction against the disease differs in accordance with the chronological age and the developmental characteristics (Brown& Fosket, 1999; Pena & Juan, 2011). The nurse should know that the care given to the child must be family-centered and the nurse has to be able to use the verbal and non-verbal communication techniques in accordance with the age and the level of development of the child (Okuyucu et al., 2003; Park., 2004). Developing standards of care shape up the responsibilites of the child nurses (S´lusarska et al., 2004; Cavusoglu, 2009). With the developing standards of care, how does the child see the nurse as a caregiver, what kind of attitude does the nurse have while care giving? If the answers to these questions are positive as a result of proper care, then the perceived image of the nurse is positive for the child and the child has a positive attitude towards the hospital and the disease to get well. In the light of this literature, this descriptive type of study was planned to determine the nursing perception of the children between 6-18 years of age who were hospitalized in child health care services.

2. Method

This sample of this descriptive study consisted of 206 voluntary children between 6-18 years of age who were hospitalized at the University Hospital in Istanbul between February 2013- February 2014. Information has been prepared in accordance with the literature and expert opinion and was collected with the "Data Collection Questionnaire" which included questions about the socio-demographic characteristics and perception of the nursing profession. Data collection questionnaire consisted of 17 questions to determine the child's and family's socio-demographic characteristics and also 8 questions to measure the child's nursing perception (whether the child has a relative who is a nurse, his/her observations about the nurse's duties, positive and negative behaviors/attitudes of the nurses, etc.) so a total of 25 questions were composed. Data were evaluated by using SPSS 17.0 package program with appropriate statistical methods.

3. Results

Table 1.Socio-demographic characteristics of the children (n=206)

Demograpgic features		n	%
Gender	Female	105	51.0
	Male	101	49.0
Age	8-12 years old	112	54.4
	13-18 years old	94	45.6
Reason for hospitalization	Chronic disease	95	46.1
	Acut disease	111	53.9
Hospitalization experience	1-3 times	103	50.0
	4-6 times	30	14.6
	7 and above	73	35.4
Duration of hospitalization	1-7 days	162	78.6
	8 days and above	44	21.4
Information about the responsibilities of nurses	From parents	197	95.6
	From friends	9	4.4
Total		206	100

Sociodemographic characteristics of the children who participated in the study are given in Table 1. 51% of children are female with a mean age of 12.22 ± 3.22. 46.1% of the children were hospitalized due to a chronic disease, 31.6% of them had repetitive (more than 7) hospitalization. According to the results obtained in the study, 95.6% of the children learned the nurses' tasks from their families as they heard them talking about this subject.

The nursing perceptions of the children via the facial expressions of the nurses is given in Table 2. 68% of the children marked the cheerful face, 25.2%, of them marked the tired face, 3,9% of them marked the sorry face, and 2.9% of them marked the angry face. When the responses regarding the responsibilities of the nurse are examined, 74.8% of them stated that the nurse was making injections and 1.9% of them stated the nurse was playing games with them.

Table 2. Nursing Perceptions of the hospitalized children (n=206)

Nursing perception of children		n	%
Do you think nurse is?	 cheerful	140	68.0
	 sad	8	3.9
	 angry	6	2.9
	 tired	52	25.2
Responsibilities of nurses	Makes injections	155	75.2
	Measure blood pressure	29	14.1
	Measure fire	18	8.7
	Play games with us	4	1.9
*Positive behaviors/attitudes of the nurse	Affectionate	161	78.2
	A good listener	135	65.5
	Supporting	68	33.0
	Good humored	40	19.3
*Negative behaviors/attitudes of the nurse	Does not smile	139	67.5
	Hurting	97	47.1
	Hasty	88	42.7
	Does not talk	48	23.3

When the opinions of the children who participated in the study about the positive behaviors and attitudes of the nurses were examined, the children stated that nurses were people who love children (78.2%), are good listeners (65.5%) and supportive (33%).For the negative behaviors and attitudes of nurses, children stated these behaviors as does not talk (23.3%), hurting (47.1%), hasty (43.2%) and does not smile (67.5%). 50% of the children stated that they wanted to be nurses when they grow up.

Table 3. Nursing perceptions of the children according to their age groups (n=206)

		Age						P value
		8-12 age		13-18 age		Total		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
Affectionate	Yes	83	74.1	78	83.0	112	78.2	2.356 0.08
	No	29	25.9	16	17.0	45	21.8	
	Total	112	100	94	100	206	100	
A good listener	Yes	72	64.3	63	67.0	135	65.5	fisher's exact 0.396
	No	40	35.7	31	33.0	71	34.5	
	Total	112	100	94	100	206	100	
Supporting	Yes	44	39.3	24	25.5	68	33.0	4.372 0.02*
	No	68	60.7	70	74.5	138	67.0	
	Total	112	100	94	100	206	100	
Good humored	Yes	15	13.4	25	26.6	40	19.4	fisher's exact

	Age						P value
	8-12 age		13-18 age		Total		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
No	97	86.6	69	73.4	166	80.6	0.01*
Total	112	100	94	100	206	100	

In Table 3, when the relationship between the age groups and the positive attitudes towards the nurses were examined,the children in the 8-12 age group, compared to children in the age group 13-18, see the nurses as people who love children and as good listeners ($p > 0.05$). As the ages of the children increased, their opionions in favor of nurses being good listeners decreased the difference between the age groups was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4:Nursingperceptions of the children according to the duration of their hospitalization (n=206)

		Duration of hospitalization						P value
		1-7days		7 and above		Total		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
Supporting	Yes	54	33.3	14	31.8	68	33.0	fisher's exact 0.50
	No	108	66.7	30	68.2	138	67.0	
	Total	162	100	44	100	206	100	
Hurting	Yes	70	43.2	27	61.4	97	47.1	fisher's exact 0.02*
	No	92	56.8	17	38.6	109	52.9	
	Total	162	100	44	100	206	100	
Hasty	Yes	68	42.0	20	45.5	88	42.7	fisher's exact 0.40
	No	94	58.0	24	54.5	118	57.3	
	Total	162	100	44	100	206	100	
Affectionate	Yes	128	79.0	33	75.0	161	78.2	fisher's exact 0.45
	No	34	21.0	11	25.0	45	21.8	
	Total	162	100	44	100	206	100	

*p<0,05

The relationship between the duration of hospitalization of the children and some variables related their perception of the nurses were examined in Table 4. Increased length of stay in hospital caused the number of children who said "nurse hurts me" to decrease and it was determined that this result was statistically significant ($p<0.05$). On the other hand, positive perceptions of nurses such as "loves children", "supportive" appears to decrease with age, and the results are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

4. Discussion and conclusion

Children hospitalized with acute or chronic disease find themselves in a period which includes an unfamiliar place, terms and people and they have to live seperately from their families for a certain amount of time. In this process, if the communication between the child and the medical team and the child's hospital experience is positive then the healing process will be positive by that amount. Nurses who spend the most time with the patients and take care of them in the hospital have a very critical role in the child's hospital experience (Cavusoglu., 2009).

Children are not informed by family members about the health care personnel or the hospital before being admitted to the hospital and they are informed about this issue the most from television, internet or experienced peers who had previous hospital experience (Inal & Akgun., 2003). According to the results obtained in the study, majority of the children heard all the responsibilities of nurses while their parents talking about this subject. This may show us that before coming to the hospital if the children learn the responsibilities of nurses this will have a positive affect on their view of this situation the children's confidence in nurses will develop.

When the nursing perceptions of the children via the facial expressions of the nurses is examined, 68% of the children marked the “cheerful” face, 25.2%, of them marked the “tired” face. In a study made to determine the perceptions of children towards the diseases and hospitals, 42.9% of the children draw the pictures of the nurses by using analogies like the theme "friendly", 4.8% of them used the theme "angels" and "flowers" (Sonmez et al., 2006). In another study in a similar manner, children draw the nurses with smiling faces (Schmidt et al., 2007). The reason behind ¼ of the children who participated in the study marking the nurses as tired is thought to be the decline in the number of nurses due to resignations and retirements.

When the responses regarding the responsibilities of the nurse are examined, 74.8% of them stated that the nurse was making injections and 1.9% of them stated the nurse was playing games with them. In a study conducted on nurses' responsibilities, the implementation of drug injection was observed to be very high (S'lusarska et al., 2004). Research shows the statement "playing games with us," was said by a very small number of children. However, playing is the universal language and the most effective communication tool for children. Children feel safe and have an opportunity to express their feelings freely while playing. Depending on the age of the child, playing is used as a useful tool in health education (Cavusoglu., 2009). Therefore, it is thought that the nurses can provide the information requested to the children using this playing tool and patients can be offered the opportunity to express themselves better by this way.

The children in this study stated that nurses were people who love children (78.2%), are good listeners (65.5%) and supportive (33%). Similarly, in other studies it is also emphasized that nurses are supportive and good listeners (Pena& Juan., 2011, Schmidt et al., 2007). As a negative behavior or attitude for nurses, children stated "does not smile" (67.5%) at most. In line with these results, it is thought that a nurse who does not smile may have difficulties in communication with the children and quality of care is thought to be affected.

Analyzing the results of the study; it was seen that the children in the 8-12 age group, compared to children in the age group 13-18, see the nurses as people who love children and as good listeners ($p > 0.05$). A study conducted in young children showed that, compared to adolescents, they see nurses as closer, more caring and people that they can speak with (Schmidt et al., 2007).

It was determined that as the ages of the children increased, they see the nurses as not supportive. However, a survey conducted showed that, as the ages of the children increase, the children see the nurses as more supportive and as a consequence of this patients share more with the nurses (Schmidt et al., 2007). In line with this result, it is understood that nurses should be supportive and give patients the opportunity to express their feelings.

According to the findings of the study, increased length of hospital stay decreased the number of children who said "the nurse hurts me”. Increased length of hospitalization increases the communication and the sense of confidence, as a result, a reduced sense of pain occurs (Pena & Juan., 2011, Schmidt et al., 2007).

According to research findings; it was determined that half of the children wanted to be nurses in the future. When the children were asked why, they gave answers like these; "To help people", "to be useful to society", "because I love children", "because I love nurses very much". Among these responses; "Dream job" one of the "to avoid hurting children while injections", "to help my friend who is sick", "nurses are very good people, that's what I want to be," replies were the most striking ones.

In conclusion; it is seen that the children perceive the nurses as friendly, are often more concerned with concrete initiatives and they rarely add playing games to this process. In line with these results, the nurses should increase and support the appropriate psychosocia care applications for children to reduce their stress due to the disease and the treatment and convert the crisis into attainment. In addition, due to their current situations for the children who frequently hospitalized and their families, support groups should be created and meetings which should be organized by the nursing services in the hospital are advised for the identified family groups to express themselves through these meetings.

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