Eliciting the Child’s Voice in Patient Experience

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Practice Problem – Patient satisfaction surveys have become a widely accepted measure of the quality of health care and are an important nurse sensitive indicator. However, measurement methods exclude the child perspective on satisfaction with care. The principles of patient-family-centered care translate into including the child’s voice in measuring patient satisfaction with care received. **Purpose/ Implementation** – The project goal was to determine the feasibility of obtaining the child’s perspective regarding patient satisfaction with nursing care received. Patient experience was evaluated utilizing a 5-item internet based survey administered to participating children using a handheld electronic tablet device. The survey documented the perspectives of three age groups: 6-8 year olds, 9-12 year olds, and 13-17 year olds using a response scale with three options displayed both graphically and in text. Children approached, were inpatients for at least 24 hours, or outpatients, at the conclusion of their Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) stay.

Summary of Literature – Every year approximately 3 million children are hospitalized in the United States according to the National Center for Health Statistics. The well and ill child’s voice in reporting on subjective symptom and quality of life experiences is now well established in the literature with emphasis on children ages 8 years and older and with selective examples of younger children (5 to 7 year olds). The concept of children having a voice in their own health care has also gained credibility with children being included on inpatient rounds and in end-of-life decision making.

Conclusion and Implications – Hospitalized children are able and willing to give their ratings of satisfaction with nursing care prior to discharge from the care setting. Formally seeking the child’s voice about satisfaction with care represents a major shift in measuring this quality indicator in pediatrics. Eliciting the child’s perspective provides an opportunity for optimization of pediatric care.

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