

Promoting the effective management of children's pain in hospital

Children's Pain (Nurses and Parents)

Narrator:

SPEAKER: When a child is in pain, the relationship between parents and nurses is really important. We're working with nurses, parents, children, and young people to understand how we can better manage children's pain in hospital.

[TEXT ON SCREEN: What we learned].

Some parents told us they are reluctant to bother a busy nurse, which can lead to lots of waiting. If a parent is unable to get help and their child's pain escalates, it can leave them feeling helpless and like they're letting them down. Parents say that waiting for a nurse is stressful, and they try different ways to help their child.

Nurses empathise with parents and want to help. They tell parents, "It doesn't matter if we're busy. Come and find us. Just grab us." But despite these messages, parents assume nurses are busy elsewhere and remain concerned about adding to their workload. Getting a child pain relief is always top priority for a parent, but nurses are juggling multiple care priorities. Nurses told us they never want to leave a child in pain, but if they don't know, other things that need recording, like fluid balance, can be given higher priority.

Pain is invisible. And some nurses told us that they used their own judgment. And if a child looked OK, they didn't ask them about their pain. A child in pain, a busy nurse, and an anxious parent can lead to frustration, misunderstanding, and terse exchanges. So how can we communicate better to minimise this?

Nurses and parents said that feeling confident and empowered were key. For nurses, this confidence allows them to be flexible and use different strategies to help with the child's pain.

Parents told us these things gave them confidence: being reminded to seek help from a nurse, nurse is listening to them and their child and showing they understood, the use of pain scores, having information about pain relief medication, and pain relieving strategies.

Nurses can support parents to feel empowered by keeping these questions in mind. Does the parent know what to expect regarding pain? Does the parent know when to expect analgesia next? Has the nurse introduced themselves to the parent and child or young person? Does the parent know where to find a nurse when they need one? By working together and communicating better, we can reduce the number of children who experience pain in hospital.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

TEXT ON SCREEN: Pain, Analgesia, Introduction, Needing help.