

THE USE OF RESTRAINT WITH YOUNG CHILDREN DURING PAINFUL MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Laura Darcy, RSCN, PhD^{1,2}, Katarina Karlsson, RSCN, PhD^{1,2}, Karin Enskär, RSCN, Professor¹

¹CHILD Research Group, Department of Nursing Science, School of Health Sciences, Jönköping University, Sweden

²Faculty of Caring Science, Work Life and Social Welfare, University of Borås, Sweden

Background

Gaining insight to the experiences of young children (3-7 years of age) undergoing painful medical procedures is challenging but possible, as shown in data gathered from children, nurses and parents in two separate Swedish PhD dissertations.

Aim & Methods

The aim of this paper is to review the use of restraint with young children during painful medical procedures. Access to the child was gained through interview, video observations, drawings and field notes. The use of play and props were vital in eliciting children's experiences.



Results

Children's need for support is tied to their experiences of fear during times of trauma and uncertainty. Children and parents described trauma related to the suddenly changed caring role parents' play: from caring parents to health care assistants. Lack of access to parents as protectors was experienced as traumatic by the child. Restraint made the child feel ashamed, humiliated and powerless, having lost the right to control his/her own body.



"It is possible to gain access to young children's experience of restraint but requires a variety of methods."

Conclusion

Restraint is never supportive from the young child's perspective. Children need to guide and be guided by nurses in mutual trust. Role definition for parents in restraint need to be reassessed.



References

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Contact information



Laura Darcy
laura.darcy@hb.se



Katarina Karlsson
katarina.karlsson@hb.se



UNIVERSITY OF BORÅS

