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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

PERCEPTIONS OF THE CAREGIVER FAMILY MEMBER ABOUT PLAYFUL CARE OF THE HOSPITALIZED CHILD

PERCEPÇÕES DO FAMILIAR CUIDADOR ACERCA DO CUIDADO LÚDICO À CRIANÇA HOSPITALIZADA

PERCEPCIONES DEL FAMILIAR CUIDADOR ACERCA DEL CUIDADO LÚDICO AL NIÑO HOSPITALIZADO

Glaucia Dal Omo Nicola[1], Silomar Ilha[2], Matheus Viero Dias[3], Hilda Maria Barbosa de Freitas[4], Dirce Stein Backes[5], Giovana Calcagno Gomes[6]

ABSTRACT

Objective: to know the perceptions of the caregiver family member about playful care during hospitalization of the child. ***Method:*** descriptive, exploratory study of qualitative approach, carried out in the first half of 2011 with family caregivers of children hospitalized in Pediatrics from a midsize Hospital of central region of Rio Grande do Sul/RS. The data production was by semi-structured interview and analysis of Content of Bardin. The research project has obtained approval from the Ethics Committee and Research, with nº 381.2010.2. ***Results:*** two categories emerged: << The toy as a way to the child interact with disease >> and << Vulnerability of parents with the hospitalization of their son >>. ***Conclusion:*** the study has highlighted the challenge of working in Pediatrics, with an allowance of a new gaze, not only for the treatment of pathologies but for health promotion in an expanded context, targeting the playful care in the nursing care of the hospitalized child. ***Descriptors:*** Games and Toys; Hospitalized Child; Family Member/Caregiver; Nursing.

RESUMO

Objetivo: conhecer as percepções do familiar cuidador acerca do cuidado lúdico durante a hospitalização da criança. *Método:* estudo exploratório, descritivo de abordagem qualitativa, realizado no primeiro semestre de 2011 com familiares cuidadores de crianças internadas na pediatria de um Hospital de médio porte da região central do Rio Grande do Sul/RS. A produção de dados foi por entrevista semiestruturada e a Análise de Conteúdo de Bardin. O projeto de pesquisa obteve aprovação do Comitê de Ética e Pesquisa, Parecer nº 381.2010.2. *Resultados:* duas categorias emergiram << O brinquedo como forma da criança interagir com a doença >> e << Vulnerabilidade dos pais frente à internação do filho >>. *Conclusão:* o estudo evidenciou o desafio de trabalhar em pediatria, tendo como subsídio um novo olhar, não somente para o tratamento de patologias, mas para a promoção da saúde num contexto ampliado, visando o cuidado lúdico no cuidado de enfermagem à criança hospitalizada. Descritores: Jogos e Brinquedos; Criança Hospitalizada; Familiar/Acompanhante; Enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: conocer las percepciones del familiar cuidador acerca del cuidado lúdico durante la hospitalización del niño. ***Método:*** estudio exploratorio, descriptivo de enfoque cualitativo, realizado en el primer semestre de 2011 con familiares cuidadores de niños internados en la pediatría de un Hospital de medio porte de la región central de Rio Grande do Sul/RS. La producción de datos fue por entrevista semi-estructurada y el Análisis de Contenido de Bardin. El proyecto de investigación tuvo su aprobación del Comité de Ética e Investigación, Parecer nº 381.2010.2. ***Resultados:*** dos categorías surgieron << El juguete como forma del niño interactuar con la enfermedad >> y << Vulnerabilidad de los padres frente a la internación del hijo >>. ***Conclusión:*** el estudio mostró el desafío de trabajar en pediatría, teniendo como subsidio una nueva visión, no solamente para el tratamiento de patologías, pero para la promoción de la salud en un contexto ampliado, visando el cuidado lúdico en el cuidado de enfermería al niño hospitalizado. ***Descriptores:*** Juegos y Juguetes; Niño Hospitalizado; Familiar/Acompañante; Enfermería.

[1]Nurse, Master degree, Post-Graduation Program in Nursing, Federal University of Rio Grande/PPGENF/FURG. Scholar of CAPES/DS. Rio Grande (RS), Brazil. E-mail: glaucianicola@hotmail.com; [2]Nurse, Specialist in Urgency, Emergency and Trauma. Master degree student, Post-Graduation Program in Nursing, Federal University of Rio Grande/PPGENF/FURG. Scholar of CAPES/DS. Rio Grande (RS), Brazil. E-mail:silo_sm@hotmail.com; [3]Nurse, Master degree student, Post-Graduation Program in Nursing, Federal University of Rio Grande/PPGENF/FURG. Scholar of CAPES/DS. Rio Grande (RS), Brazil. E-mail: enf.matheusviero@gmail.com; [4]Nurse, Master in Nursing, Doctorate student in Nursingby in Dinter Novas Fronteiras/UNIFESP/UFRJ/UFSM. Teacher, Franciscano University Center/UNIFRA. Santa Maria (RS), Brazil. E-mail: hildasame@gmail.com; [5]Nurse, Doctorate in Nursing, Teacher, Franciscano University Center/UNIFRA. Santa Maria (RS), Brazil. E-mail: backesdirce@ig.com.br; [6]Nurse, Doctorate Professor in Nursing, Federal University of Rio Grande (FURG). Rio Grande (RS), Brazil. E-mail: giovanacalcagno@furg.br

INTRODUCTION

Hospitalized childcare has been appeared in studies by health professionals concerned with the well-being and health of individuals in the different environments in which they are. The hospital can be understood as a place that provides various feelings both to hospitalized child as to their families. In this environment, the child goes through an experience that affects in their emotional development, since the hospitalization of the child away from their environment, their pet objects and people from his life that makes him experience unpleasant moments. [1]

The hospital unleashes emotional tension in the child, due to fear of being abandoned and losing the affection of the family, as well as the threat of painful situations, requiring security and affection. In this context, the playful care has been gaining space, since it is characterized by activities of comfort that can be developed in the human evolutionary cycle.[2]

It is stressed that these activities are related with leisure, communications, games, relaxation, dialogue, music (singing, listening, dancing), among others, i.e., there is a specific time for realization of the playful care that permeates the entire process of child care in the hospital.

The playful care helps in adaptation of the child to the hospital environment, improving their health, easing their fears and anxieties, as well as to the caregiver family member. In this way, new complementary therapies to the diagnostic and therapeutic process for the treatment of the child have achieved and adaptive human needs, without restricting it from their children's world, valuing the uniqueness, as well as the social and cultural context in which it is inserted, in search of the care with no traumas.[3]

When playing, the child plays many roles during hospitalization such as: fun, relaxation, security in a strange environment.[4] From this perspective, the child hospitalized nursing care uses the toy as a way of alleviating tensions and disorders caused by hospitalization, and not only to satisfy recreational needs, but rather, to promote the physical, mental, emotional development and socialization. Using this as a way of playful care, besides providing the nursing staff interaction with the child about the meaning of situations experienced by him, assists in the search for new strategies on nursing care.[5]

The use of the toy in nursing care offers to the professional a better understanding of the needs and feelings of the hospitalized child, enabling the child to design in the outside world their fears and anxieties, being an active role in their assistance.[6] Thus, it is evidenced that the use of the toy has been shown to be effective and a facilitator in the therapeutic relationship between the children and health professionals because it promotes child the relief of stress often caused by the procedures.[7]

Therefore, the playful care, permeating the actions of nursing professionals, minimizes the damages arising from hospitalization, because it provides a pleasant and cozy environment in which the child may feel encouraged to play. With the goal of new achievements in the care to the hospitalized child it emerges the need to create an environment that approaches the infant world, considering each age group. Thus, it emerges the Law nº 11,104, of March 2005, which provides for the mandatory installation of playroom in the health units that offer pediatric care in inpatient procedure.[8]

The playroom consists of a project that aims to provide recreational activities that value “playing” as a way to ease their feelings of suffering before the hospitalization, in order to strengthen the link between the hospitalized child, his caregiver and the nursing staff.[9] From the implementation of this strategy, it realizes that changes related to hospitalized child care are occurring.

When transferred to the context of hospitalization, the playful care emerges as a possibility to adapt to the new. The act of playing encourages the child to use the available resources in the context of hospitalization to elaborate the situation experienced.[10] Therefore, it constitutes a stimulating activity, fun, creative and enriching that helps in the recovery of the child.

Thus, it is displayed the importance of studies that will understand the playful care in the perspective of family caregivers who experience the reality of the child's hospitalization. Basis on the above, it is wondered: what is the caregiver family member’s perspective about the playful care to the hospitalized child? In anticipation of possible new gazes, interactive and engaged with the care to the hospitalized child, the objective was to meet the family caregiver's perspective about the playful childcare in the hospital.

METHOD

Exploratory, descriptive study of qualitative approach,[11] performed in a

Pediatric Unit of a midsize hospital located in the central region of Rio Grande do Sul. As a criterion for inclusion was to be caregiver family member of hospitalized children during the period of data collection, where five family caregivers were part on this study.

The production data has been in the period from March to May of 2011, by a semi-structured interview contemplating open questions.[11] Data were analyzed and categorized following the analysis of content of Bardin,12 from a pre-analysis (organizing the material collected and systematizing the ideas through meticulous reading of responses obtained in the interview) and then the categorization of registry unit was done, which resulted in three categories.

Ethical and legal precepts involving research with human beings were considered, as resolution 196/96 of the Ministry of health.[13] Thus, the term of Consent was previously distributed for the participants of the research, this being in two ways, getting one to the participants and another to the researcher. The anonymity of the subjects was maintained and they were identified by the letter "F" (family), followed by a numeric digit, as the order of the interview: (F1, F2, F3 ...).

The research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Franciscano University Center UNIFRA – under number 381.2010.2.

RESULTS

The analysis of data generated two categories: the toy as a way to child´s interaction with the pathology and the vulnerability of parents with the hospitalization of their son.

♦ The toy as a way of child´s interaction with the disease

The lines of the family showed the importance of nursing care to be conducted from recreational activities, fostering the acceptance/understanding of the child during hospitalization, according to the reports as followed:

> *[...] My mother and I play enough with her (child hospitalized) in the playroom. Her recovery has improved after they started playing and wasting energy. (F5)*
>
> *The early days of my daughter's hospitalization was a terror, the way she arrived and how she is today. Well, she had no color, she was pale. Now she plays, runs and feeds well [...]. (F3)*
>
> *[...] Playing she is more calm. So, I take her in the playroom and bring her toys from home too [...]. (F4)*

During the interviews, it was noted that the families value the space of the playroom and visualize their importance in the improvement of the treatment. We highlight the importance of children's playroom available in Pediatric Unit, where it can reinvent their imaginary world, seeking ways to overcome the difficulties caused by hospitalization. The hospital playroom assists in the care of the child, as it allows a better adaptation in the scenario in which it is inserted. The kids are back in this environment, more calm and happy, providing greater acceptance in care.

♦ Vulnerability of parents with the hospitalization of their son

In the reports of family caregivers, it was shown the emotional disorder that the hospitalization of a child causes, becoming thus an obstacle to be overcome by the caregiver family member, mostly by his mother.

> *[...] At night is much more difficult, because the children are in the bedroom, they cry, are restless, nervous. It makes me very anxious. You need a lot of conversation. [...] (F1)*
>
> *[...] The hardest time is time to take the vein, she gets very upset, she screams. Sometimes she agrees to do physical therapy, today she does not accept. But, joking and chatting with her she gets more calm [...] (F4).*

During the lines of family members, it was realized numerous feelings manifested by the hospitalization of the child. How the family reacts before the child at this difficult time it has become essential for the acceptance and recovery. Different from what many consider, the child understands what is occurring around him, so the preparation of family to cope against the situation of hospitalization is indispensable for an effective recovery. Like the playing, the dialogue with the child and family helps in the playful care in the hospitalized child.

DISCUSSION

The hospitalization period corresponds to a moment of impact for both child and family, by modifications in the routine provoked by it. When experiencing the process of hospitalization, the child, seeks support in the closest people, such as family, friends and health team.[14] In this context, the professionals working in child care in the hospital need to identify the family not only as a resource but as an ally in the humanized care qualification and integral to this being growing up. The participation of the family, in the integral care to the hospitalized child has

been the subject of study in nursing with regard to dimension and to the way in which such participation has given assistance in daily life.[15]

The Brazilian public policies that integrate the *Sistema Único de Saúde* (SUS) have given focus to the family as part of the scenario of childcare, advocating that the health services offer a qualified professionals committed listener with humanized care, emphasizing universal access, reception, full assistance and resolutive, equity team working and participation of the family.[16]

The playful space in pediatric units becomes an ally to caregivers and nursing staff, as it helps the child to express through playing his fears and sorrows, as well as what he expects from family and nursing staff during hospitalization.[13] Thus, the playful care comes to meet a new perspective, in which the hospitalized child has the possibility to socialize his experiences through playing establishing physical, emotional, cognitive, psychological and social transformations.

The comprehension that playing is a basic necessity and important for people who take care of the child in hospital environment to value as far as hygiene, food, medication or other procedures.[17] Thus, playing is not an additional activity to be provided to the child if "it is time to do it" or if "people involved in care are want to" because the child care must be taken not only with the pathology but with the satisfaction of their needs as human being who grows and develops.

Playing becomes important for child's development, as well as in the process of socialization and creativity improvement.[3] Children who experience the hospitalization generally stay away from their families, personal objects and their daily lives. They end up experiencing feelings of guilt and helplessness, requiring the other to take the first steps of their existence in a world where they find out continuously through relations, allowing the pursuit of understanding of themselves, of the other and the world. Soon, both the family and the nursing staff need to take care of the child as their singularities, valuing their world, their age group and in particular, the reason that led to hospitalization.[18] One of the important responsibilities of nursing is to ease the suffering, making the hospitalization period less traumatic. Thus, this professional must promote a quality and service that meets the physiological, psychological and social difficulties of the children.[19]

Therefore, the nurse in the hospital environment needs to build a bond of trust with the child and his/her family, easing the traumas, facilitating adaptation to the new environment. Thus, it is understandable that the playful care reveals itself as one of the strategies of care to be considered against the experiences of children who experience the disease. Soon, the playful care can be understood as a tool that enhances the well-being of the child and the family, becoming an ally of the professionals involved in care. To this end, it is necessary for family members and nursing staff who take care of the hospitalized child are open to dialogue, authentic presence being fundamental of being with each other in time and space. In this way, the interaction of the family with nursing staff becomes an important way so together they find ways to alleviate difficulties faced during the hospitalization, because the emotional wear and tear of the parents and other family members may interfere directly in recovery and acceptance of the child.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that we must consolidate the challenge of working in pediatrics with an allowance of a new gaze, not only for treatment of diseases, but to the playful care in a context expanded, targeting the care in nursing care for the child in the hospital. It was not intended to judge, condemn or defend the position or point of view of the participants of this study, however, it is an attempt to understand how the playful care can interfere positively in the recovery of the child in the hospital.

It was possible to notice that the families feel distressed, apprehensive, which develop psychopathological processes as result of the changes that the hospitalization does in the daily lives of the child and the family. This conflict takes place, for the most part, facing the unknown, caused by the sudden change of being compelled to meet in an environment that, initially, it seems hostile, by the need to fit predetermined routines required by institutional standards adopted by the hospital or inpatient clinic the child specific.

It was evidenced that the relatives acknowledge the importance of the playful care in the care of the hospitalized child because the playful care becomes a perspective in which the hospitalized child has the possibility to socialize his experiences through playing, establishing physical, emotional, cognitive, psychological and social transformations.

It was observed that this care provides calmness to the families. In the meantime, we

highlight that the playful is a form of nursing care that enhances the well-being of the child and the family, becoming an ally of the professionals involved in care. Therefore, family members and nursing professionals should be mediators in the process of child care in the hospital, giving emphasis to dialogue and playful in the process of care and interaction during hospitalization. It is important that both consider the child as someone exposed to adaptations, conflicts, uncertainties and instabilities. Thus, it becomes important to undertake further studies and research that will demonstrate the importance of the playful care as enhancer in the treatment and recovery of the hospitalized child, with a view to alleviate suffering and anguish of both the child and the family caregivers.

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Corresponding Address

Glaucia Dal Omo Nicola
Rua Maria Noal, 8,
Bairro Patronato
CEP: 97020510 — Santa Maria (RS), Brazil