HOSPITAL CLOWNS – THE HUMAN WAY TO RELIEF ANXIETY

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The Challenge of Children

And they bring their parents, grandparents.....
Children and Preoperative Anxiety
One Bad Experience

• Is the most important predictor of anxiety at induction.
• Causes 3-4 times increase in postoperative behavioral disturbances, nightmares, waking op crying, outbursts of anger, fear of parental separation.
• Last for more than 6 month in 20%
• Last for more than a year in 7%

Optiions
Hospital Clown

Preparation

Parental presence

The anxious child

Diversion
- Video
- Computer games
- Music
- Story telling
- Playing
- Virtual reality

Sensory input

Pharmacology

Effect of Hospital Clowns on Distress

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Youngfu J Paediatrics and Healthcare
2017:53:237-45
Medical clowns reduce pre-operative anxiety, post-operative pain and medical costs in children undergoing outpatient penile surgery: A randomised controlled trial

- 80 boys
- Clown/no clown
- Mask induction
- Modified Yale pre/postoperative anxiety scale
  - activity, emotional expressivity, state of arousal, vocalisation and use of parents.

J Paediatric and child health 52;2016:877-881
Results

• Reduced preoperative anxiety  $p < 0.03$
• Reduced postoperative anxiety  $p < 0.001$
• Reduced induction time  $p < 0.001$
• Reduced or time  $p < 0.0001$
• Reduced time to discharge  $p < 0.02$
• No difference in pain scores
Evaluation Among Health Professionals

- Favour of clown present 96.4%
- Useful for the children 96.4%
- Useful for the parents 89.3%
- Useful for them selves 78.3%
Evaluation among Parents

- Favour 97.5%
- Disturbing 2.5%

- Timesaving
  - Reduced cost 11$ pr child
Anesthesia is Teamwork

- Basic life support
  - Airway
  - Breathing
  - Circulation
  - Iv lines
  - Dosing
  - Etc

- The psychological dealing with the child and parents
What can the Hospital Clown Bring

- Contact in the waiting area
  - Often the “ice breaker”
  - Easing the situation
  - Reduce anxiety while waiting
    - Magic, ballons, trick, making “naughty” plans, humor, funny talking
    - Out of context. Finding things that the child is interested in. Magic stone
    - Playing stupid

- The team discuss the situation before taking the child to the theater
  - Make a plan if needed.

- Support the child on the way to the theater
On induction.
The child is the center of all communication

Distraction
Music
Humor
“Naughty” things.
Comforting
Soap bobles
Water!
Fart cushion

Gives me the full concentration on basic anesthesia

Always working close together
Alert to the little signs
    How is the child coping in the situation.
    Action?
The child is the center of all attention.
One at a time!
    Roles may change

    Time is of the essence
Evaluation

- What worked
- What could have been done differently
- What did we learn from this case
Postoperatively

• Clown meets the child again
  • Praises the child
  • Comforts if there is pain
  • Removal of iv line

• The staff
  • Praises the child
  • How did the child experience the induction
  • Gold medal and diploma
  • Ice cream and chips
  • Future?
Observation and interview study
Observation in the waiting area and until anesthesia was established
Interview at home
14 kids (2-11 years)
The clown was funny
Interaction with staff
The way she spoke
Magic was good
Magic stone was good

Nordisk sygeplejeforskning 2016;4:352-67
• Reduced anxiety
• Helped them to forget
• Enabled them to do things they were afraid of both during hospital stay and after discharge
• Coped better
• Contrasting and unpredictable
• Slightly unintelligent
• Illogical questions
• Breaking rules
• Because it is like the clown is acting stupid, and so they do. But it is SO funny when they are acting stupid, because then they are fumbeling with the word and stuff like that.

• And then we talked about about whether I was married to my girlfriend or something like that, but I was not (laughing)

• The doctor sat on the chair and then he farted (laughing) and then he said: was it you or was i you (pointing around) and then we said nothing. We just said nope it was not us.

• It was that man (the doctor).. And then I sprayed water on his trousers (explains very enthusiastically) (Interviewer: did you spray water on his trousers?) Yes! Am I right dad? That was funny

• When the clown says to G, that he is not allowed to make his homework for a year after hospitalization, he looks at his mom and exclaim: wow .. I want to text my teacher.
- The lucky stone helped
- Breaking point turning the situation around
  - Breaking the ice

- The children put into words that they were nervous but not afraid and described it as a normal feeling
The Optimal Team To Me

- Experienced anesthesiologist
- Experienced nurse anesthetist
- Nurse that takes care of the parents once the child is asleep
- Expirienced hospital clown
What Have I Learned from Working with a Clown?

- Humor
- Unpredictability
- “Naughty” things
- Playing “unintelligent”
- Asking strange question
- Water/bubbles

- Changes my work with the child
- But I can never be a substitute for a clown!
Getting started?

- Be openminded and learn
- Expectations of each other
- Obstacles?
- Evaluate
- Let your inner child free
- "If it is good for the child it is good for me"
- Only one clown
- Not all children like clowns
- Continuity