



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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Inclusion of Child Life Specialists in Paediatric Perioperative Care – Joint Collaboration between Paediatric Department and Same Day Surgery in UCH

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Introduction

Children and their families exhibited anxiety and worries in a surgical setting are common. Such anxiety would be the highest on the day of surgery and children would manifest it in behavior such as crying, agitation, fighting and even attempting to escape. High level preoperative anxiety was reported to have correlation with maladaptive post-operative behaviours. It is a specialized area in preparing children for medical experience as children process information differently from adults. Child Life Specialists are health care professionals commonly found in the US and Canada. Their primary role is to provide families and children with individualized psychosocial care that should be tailored to their age, developmental level and previous experience. Child Life (formerly named Hospital Play) service was introduced to UCH in 2012 under a partnership between Children's Cancer Foundation and UCH. The need of child patients in Same Day Surgery came to the attention to the paediatric team and Child Life support was extended to Same Day Surgery in 2014 under a pilot project. The pilot project was launched in two periods for 10 months in 2014 to 2015, 92 patients and families received Child Life support.

Objectives

To include Child Life service in Same Day Surgery and avoid unnecessary anxiety among the child patients and their families.

Methodology

Child Life Specialists joint the OR team and delivered preoperative care. Child Life Specialist would engage the children with play and help children understand the surgery and develop realistic expectations of the procedure. Parental anxiety would be handled to maximize their role in comforting their children. The support started at admission and be carried through to the OR and during induction of anesthesia.

Result

Pilot run was conducted from Sept 2014 to Feb 2015 and Child Life support was given to 42 patients aged 3 and above. Nursing staff reported that children's compliance and emotion were improved. The programme was launched again in Sept 2015. New measures were adopted to enhance support to toddlers. As parent was the

best comfort to young children, the Parental Presence at Induction Scheme at Day Surgery was strengthened by having Child Life Specialists to assess and prepare parents. From September to December 2015, 50 patients from infant to aged 14 were supported. Child Life Specialists provided 37 distraction activities and play at the waiting area; 41 age-appropriate preparation and 41 procedural support inside OR room; 26 parents were prepared and 22 parents were able to be present and comfort their children inside OR.