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New Perspectives on the Treatment of Childhood Pain



The definition of pain does not always fully cover the experience of certain patients, like children, who have a limited ability to express and describe their pain. The Hospital Universitari de Terrassa and the UAB evaluate the satisfaction of professionals and families with sedation and analgesia techniques in pediatric emergency departments, with the aim of improving treatment protocols and guidelines through a broader perspective on pain.

Pain is defined as an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with an actual or potential injury. Although this definition is generally applicable to everybody, it does not always fully cover the experience of certain patients, especially in childhood. Therefore, a broader definition has been proposed that considers pain as a personal and complex experience, influenced by physical, emotional, social and cultural factors, which makes each person perceive it differently.

Pain management is a particularly complicated issue in paediatrics, since children, due to their limited ability to express themselves, are often unable to describe pain clearly. This can sometimes lead to pain not being adequately treated, which generates discomfort and stress in both patients and their families.

A recent study carried out at the Hospital Universitari de Terrassa, in collaboration with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), evaluated the satisfaction of professionals and families with sedation and analgesia techniques in pediatric emergency departments. Our results showed that, in general, both professionals and families were quite satisfied with the treatment received. However, families were found to be slightly less satisfied than health professionals. Our results also suggested that some of the techniques used were not as effective as expected, as children reported experiencing some degree of pain during the procedures performed during their stay in the emergency department.

Nowadays, the Hospital Universitari de Terrassa is reviewing and updating its protocols and guidelines for pain management in the pediatric emergency department to improve both the quality of care and the comfort of children in need of urgent care. This approach also considers the needs and expectations of families, following a patient-centred model of care. The implementation of this patient-centred care model improves the emotional and psychological well-being of infants and their families, promoting humanised care adapted to the needs of each patient and their family.

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