CHILD FRIENDLY HOSPITAL - QUALITY INDICATOR OF PEDIATRIC HEALTH CARE


Croatian Coordinating Committee (CCC) for Action „For Child's Smile in Hospital“

INTRODUCTION

To increase quality of health care for children in the pediatric hospitals/wards in Croatia, two professional associations (Croatian Society for Preventive and Social Pediatrics and Croatian Association of Pediatric Nurses) and one civil society (Union of Societies „Our Children Croatia“) started with the program „Action for Child's Smile in Hospital“ (ACSH) in 1999.

METHODS OF THE ACSH

The ACSH is carried out in 36 hospitals/wards in Croatia. Dissemination of information is performed by publishing of newsletter edited by the CCC.

Relevant data for the program were collected through questionaries and corresponding responses from randomly selected samples from all levels of hospital/ward staff, patients and their parents and volunteers.

RESULTS OF THE ACSH

Until now the following results were achieved:
- accommodation of parents with hospitalized child, particularly in breast-feeding cases,
- involvement of parents in health care increased,
- painful and invasive procedures are accompanied with adequate analgesia (anaesthesia)
- extensive education of the staff which participate in the care of child in hospital,
- continual education of staff on children’s patient rights
- adaptation of children facilities to be functional and pleasant and to fulfill certain esthetic criteria,
- organization of playrooms provided with toys, comics, journals and books,
- introduction of kindergartens and schools in hospital,
- organization of theatre performances and the clown’s shows in hospital,
- Famous musicians, sportsmen and persons from media visiting children in hospital,
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Up to now 23 out of 36 hospitals/wards included in the ACSH fulfill 80% or more of all requirements of the program and were awarded by the honorary title «Children’s hospital/ward – friend of children» from the CCC.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Based on achievements/experiences of the ACSH the CCC is recommending the following improvements:
- political and NGO’s support for balancing of corresponding legislation with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and with EACH charter,
- introducing education modules in curricula of kindergartens, schools, universities and professional medical societies,
- financial support for multidisciplinary approach training of medical staff and and for introducing hospital/ward rules and procedures,
- full support for maintenance/improvement of children's and parent's rights,
- to empower parents and children to participate in decisions regarding the treatment and care,
- providing more time for communication of staff with parents and children,
- enhancement of social awareness in order to support voluntary activities

- involving PATH project in order to develop quality indicators and tools for the assessment of child friendly hospital culture, which would support maintenance of this program and enlarged activities for further improvements of health care quality for pediatric patients.

AIM OF THE PROGRAM

is to provide implementation of 12 requirements for the improvement of medical, psychosocial and developmental needs of children and their families in a friendly, safe and secure environment.

Program of the ACSH is in a line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and European Association for Children in Hospital Charter (EACH, 1988).

Such program has been applied to children from newborns to adolescents (up to 18 years age).

The ACSH was officially supported by the Croatian Ministry of Health.

The promotion and implementation of the action was recognized and accepted by the public, and hence, the Government of Croatia approved it in 2006 within the framework of the National plan of activities for children's rights and benefits in the period from 2006 to 2012.

Requirements of the ACSH

1. Admission of the child into hospital only if the care required cannot be equally well provided at home or on a daily basis
2. Maximal shortening of the child’s stay in hospital
3. Holistic approach to the sick child
4. Additional training of all staff caring for children in hospital to understand and respond to their developmental, emotional and cultural needs
5. Modern medical standards and appliance of safety culture for the child’s stay in hospital
6. Individual approach to each child, respecting individual needs
7. Allow parents to stay with hospitalized children
8. Encouragement of the parental participation in the nursing and treatment of the child
9. Opportunity for education (school, kindergarten) for children in hospital
10. Games and activities that children themselves choose and participate
11. Encouragement of the parental participation in the nursing and treatment of the child
12. Creating a more improved and functional hospital environment

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

According to data analyzed it may be concluded that:
- Appropriate care for children's wellbeing resulted in their more effective medical treatment.
- Adequate approach of medical staff provided children's improved reception to variety of information and treatment procedures.
- Support of parents to their children is greatly enhanced, particularly in coping with stress and medical treatments.
- Hospital staff is more cooperative for creating child friendly atmosphere.
- However, motivation and education of the staff for the ACSH should be further improved.

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