

Undergoing Tonsillectomy: Experiences of Parents and Children

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Tonsillectomy is a common surgery performed on children. This study attempts to explore the experiences of parents and children undergoing tonsillectomy. This was performed by obtaining information about how parents and children were prepared for admission to hospital, and their experiences which were analysed perioperatively. Also included were their views regarding the discharge from hospital.

The study was conducted in a ward which specialises in Ear Nose and Throat (E.N.T.) conditions which is in the main local general hospital of Malta. The ward caters for both children and adult patients. In this study, the sample population is made up of ten children and ten adults, the latter being the child’s biological parent. These were conveniently selected. To collect the data, a survey research design was used. Structured interviews were used as a form of data collection. The tool consisted of two separate interview schedules one for parents and one for the children. Both simple quantitative and qualitative analysis were employed.

Results revealed that all participants were content with the whole hospital experience but at the same time amendments on certain issues were felt needed. It was found that nurses lacked in providing information. This study revealed that parents talked to their children regarding the hospitalisation and surgery and that they also contributed in their child’s hospitalisation. About the visiting hours, parents only could attend the hospitalized child. This emphasis by the ward staff was primarily aimed at minimising the risk of infection that the child could pick up. Although the ward environment was identified as being nice and clean, it was not found to be suitable for children. At the induction phase, children mostly recalled their mother and the doctor assisting them to sleep and the parent being the first person the children remarked on seeing when they awoke. Parents and children were found to be eager to return home, back to their familiar surroundings.

Recommendations included measures to improve the preparation of children and their parents undergoing tonsillectomy, revising the policy concerning the visiting hours and the ward’s need for a designated area for children incorporating toys and books. Further research on a larger scale is recommended for nurses to develop appropriate interventions tailored to the needs of the child and parents that will improve their skill to deal with surgery and also on the child’s views of the information they feel they need to help them understand the overall hospital experience.