



Health Awareness

Shriners Hospitals Find Effective Ways To Improve Pain Management

(NAPSA)—Pain management programs are making hospital stays easier for all patients—especially the youngest patients.

Shriners Hospitals for Children have had pain management programs in place for years. Last year, the Joint Commission on Accredited Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) set forth new standards of compliance regarding pain management. Hospitals are now required to measure a patient's pain regularly and provide proper pain relief.

Pain management is a collaborative effort. The pre-admissions program at the Philadelphia Shriners Hospital provides an interactive, educational program for children, adolescents and their families in order to reduce anxiety and/or fear associated with hospitalization, testing and surgery.

The program encourages patients and their families to express fears or ask questions in a supportive environment that listens and responds to questions and concerns.

"Approximately two to four weeks prior to the surgery, the family comes to the hospital. We review the general admission process and answer questions related to surgery, PACU (post-anesthesia care unit) and pain medication, including PCA (patient-controlled anesthesia) instructions. Families also receive a copy of our pain brochure," said Rita Moore, RN, BSN, clinical liaison.

Recreational therapists, mem-



A pain chart with varying faces can help children identify the pain they are feeling.

bers of the Rehab Services Department, work with nurses to provide a comprehensive program, including pre-admission, preparation, pre-procedural teaching and peri-operative support to patients and families.

"The pre-admission program helps children prepare for hospitalization by focusing on medical teaching, pain management, coping techniques and discussion of anxieties related to hospitalization," said Mary Ann Roberto, a recreational therapist.

At the Philadelphia Shriners Hospital, children regularly undergo orthopedic surgeries. Several techniques are used to measure pain. Patients can rate how they are feeling using a pain scale of zero (no pain) to 10 (the worst pain).

Younger children are shown drawings of faces with expressions showing various levels of pain, and are asked to choose the pain that describes how they are feeling. Pain scales are readily avail-

able at the patients' bedside. Infant pain is more difficult to detect. Rapid heartbeat and prolonged crying can be signs of pain.

Recently, a video "tour" of the operating room was added to the program. This tour takes the individual through a sequence of events leading up to surgery, including the sights, sounds and people they may encounter. It shows some of the equipment used including an IV, pulse, oximeter, mask and various monitors. Viewing the video helps demystify the operating room and its complex medical procedures.

The steps the hospital has taken to ensure its compliance with the new standards are extremely positive. Team members continually work to improve the process of identifying, alleviating, or at best, managing the pain of patients.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States, or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.