



ROLE OF FAMILY-CENTERED CARE IN IMPROVING POSTOPERATIVE RECOVERY AMONG PEDIATRIC PATIENTS

Ruth Lalhmingthang

Principal Department of Nursing, BN College of Nursing, Aizawl, Mizoram, India.

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Corresponding Author

Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi

Abstract

Family-centered care (FCC) is a critical approach in pediatric nursing that emphasizes collaboration between healthcare providers, patients, and families to optimize care outcomes. Pediatric patients undergoing surgical procedures often face heightened anxiety, pain, and stress, which can negatively impact postoperative recovery. Integrating FCC into clinical practice ensures that families are actively involved in decision-making, pain management, emotional support, and continuity of care. This research explores the impact of family-centered interventions on postoperative recovery in pediatric patients, including reduced hospital stays, improved pain control, and enhanced psychological well-being. Using case studies, data analysis, and structured questionnaires, the study highlights how engaging parents and caregivers as active participants enhances recovery outcomes, promotes adherence to postoperative care plans, and fosters resilience in children. The findings underscore that FCC is not merely supportive but a transformative strategy in pediatric postoperative care.

Keywords: Family-Centered Care; Pediatric Nursing; Postoperative Recovery; Pediatric Surgery; Pain Management; Parental Involvement; Patient-Centered Care; Child Anxiety; Nursing Interventions; Pediatric Outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Surgical interventions in children, while life-saving or corrective, are often accompanied by significant stress and anxiety, which can adversely affect physiological and psychological recovery [1-5]. Pediatric patients may experience fear, postoperative pain, and difficulty complying with treatment instructions due to developmental limitations [6-8]. Traditionally, pediatric care focused primarily on the clinical and procedural aspects, often overlooking the role of the family in supporting recovery [9].

Family-centered care (FCC) represents a paradigm shift in pediatric healthcare. FCC emphasizes collaboration among healthcare providers, patients, and families, recognizing parents and caregivers as essential partners in care delivery [10]. Through active engagement, families can provide emotional support, monitor recovery

progress, assist with pain management, and facilitate adherence to discharge instructions [11-14]. Evidence suggests that FCC improves postoperative outcomes by reducing anxiety, enhancing pain control, shortening hospital stays, and increasing patient and family satisfaction [15, 16].

This research explores the implementation of FCC in pediatric postoperative care. It analyzes case studies, surveys pediatric nurses and families, and presents data demonstrating the benefits of integrating families into the care process [17, 18]. The study underscores the importance of evidence-based interventions and the nursing role in facilitating family engagement, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of FCC's impact on pediatric recovery [19, 20].



METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method research design was used to evaluate the role of FCC in pediatric postoperative recovery [21-23]:

1. Literature Review:

Academic journals, pediatric nursing guidelines, and WHO recommendations were analyzed to identify best practices in family-centered postoperative care.

2. Case Studies:

Two pediatric patients undergoing elective surgery were observed to assess the impact of FCC interventions on recovery outcomes.

3. Survey/Questionnaire:

Structured questionnaires were distributed to 50 pediatric nurses and 60 parents to assess the implementation and effectiveness of FCC. Questions addressed pain management, emotional support, parental involvement, and satisfaction with care [25].

4. Data Analysis:

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and percentage distributions, while qualitative responses were thematically analyzed to evaluate experiences of parents, patients, and nurses.

5. Ethical Considerations:

Parental consent was obtained, and confidentiality of patient data was strictly maintained throughout the study.

Case Study

Patient A: A 6-year-old male undergoing tonsillectomy.

Interventions:

- Parents were allowed to remain with the child pre- and postoperatively.
- Nurses provided education on pain management and postoperative care.
- Non-pharmacological strategies such as guided imagery and distraction were used with parental participation.
- Parents monitored the child’s fluid intake, mobilization, and comfort levels under nurse supervision [26].

Outcome:

- Reduced postoperative anxiety and lower pain scores (measured using FLACC scale).
- Early ambulation and adherence to dietary recommendations.
- Enhanced parental confidence in managing recovery at home.

Patient B: A 9-year-old female undergoing appendectomy.

Interventions:

- Family involvement in wound care and medication administration.
- Nurses coached parents on recognizing signs of complications.
- Emotional support strategies, including storytelling and play therapy, were facilitated with parental participation.

Outcome:

- Smooth recovery without postoperative complications.
- Reduced hospital stay by 1 day compared to previous similar cases.
- Positive feedback from both child and parents regarding hospital experience [27].

Data Analysis

Table 1: Impact of Family-Centered Care on Pediatric Postoperative Recovery (n=50 Nurses Surveyed)

Intervention Component	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Family involvement reduces child anxiety	32	15	2	1	0
FCC improves adherence to care plans	30	17	3	0	0
Parental education enhances recovery	35	12	2	1	0
FCC reduces postoperative pain scores	28	18	4	0	0
Patient/family satisfaction improves	33	14	2	1	0

Table 2: Parent Feedback on FCC Implementation (n=60)

Parameter Evaluated	Positive Response	Negative Response	Observation
Confidence in managing postoperative care	52	8	Parents felt empowered and informed



Child's anxiety reduced	48	12	Active participation alleviated fear
Child's adherence to instructions improved	50	10	Compliance with medication and diet increased
Satisfaction with nursing support	54	6	High satisfaction with FCC approach
Reduced hospital stays due to effective FCC	45	15	Early discharge facilitated by parental help

Questionnaire For Nurses:

1. Do you involve parents actively in postoperative care planning?
2. Do family-centered strategies reduce postoperative anxiety in children?
3. Is parental education integrated into routine care protocols?
4. Do FCC interventions improve adherence to postoperative instructions?
5. Does involving families improve overall patient satisfaction?

For Parents:

1. Were you actively involved in your child's care after surgery?
2. Did your child experience less pain and anxiety with your involvement?
3. Did nurses educate you about postoperative care effectively?
4. Did family participation help in adherence to recovery instructions?
5. Were you satisfied with the overall hospital

experience?

CONCLUSION

Family-centered care significantly enhances postoperative recovery among pediatric patients by integrating parents as active partners in care. Evidence suggests that FCC reduces anxiety, improves adherence to care plans, optimizes pain management, and shortens hospital stays. Nurses play a pivotal role in educating families, facilitating emotional support, and monitoring recovery, thereby promoting holistic well-being.

Implementing FCC requires structured protocols, staff training, and a supportive hospital environment. Encouraging family participation not only empowers caregivers but also fosters resilience and confidence in children. Healthcare institutions should prioritize FCC as an essential component of pediatric postoperative care, ensuring that families remain integral to recovery strategies.

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