



Humanized care in pediatric care: family, emotional and spiritual impact

Atención humanizada en cuidados pediátricos: impacto familiar, emocional y espiritual

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: family participation in pediatric care turns out to be a need felt by caregivers with infants, transforming person-centered care; therefore, we sought to analyze on humanized care in pediatric care services, as well as how this affects at emotional, family and spiritual level. Method: qualitative research, with descriptive design of bibliographic review type with a sample of 30 articles. The information was collected in indexed databases such as Scopus, Scielo, Pubmed and Redalyc, using keywords in English, Spanish and Portuguese, together with Boolean operators (AND, OR); these were structured in an Excel matrix for analysis using the CASPe rubric. Result: humanized care in pediatric services has a significant and positive impact on their overall well-being. This approach, based on respect, empathy, and effective communication, favors the construction of an environment of trust that facilitates the emotional accompaniment of caregivers throughout the health care process. Conclusion: pediatric care significantly improves emotional, family and spiritual well-being. Empathetic, communicative and respectful care reduces stress, anxiety and vulnerability in patients and their families. Therefore, the implementation of the open-door model promotes family participation, improves clinical evolution, and optimizes treatment outcomes by integrating the family into the care.

Keywords: Anxiety; Humanized Care; Caregivers; Pediatrics.

RESUMEN

Introducción: la participación de la familia en la atención pediátrica resulta ser una necesidad sentida por los cuidadores con los infantes, transformado el cuidado centrado en la persona; por lo que, se buscó analizar sobre la atención humanizada en los servicios de cuidados pediátricos, así como este afecta a nivel emocional, familiar y espiritual. Método: investigación cualitativa, con diseño descriptivo de tipo revisión bibliográfica con muestra de 30 artículos. La información se recopiló en bases de datos indexadas tales como Scopus, Scielo, Pubmed y Redalyc, utilizando palabras claves en inglés, español y portugués, en conjunto con operadores booleanos (AND, OR); estos se estructuraron en una matriz de Excel para su análisis mediante la rúbrica CASPe. Resultados: la atención humanizada en los servicios pediátricos tiene un impacto significativo y positivo en su bienestar integral. Este enfoque, basado en el respeto, la empatía y una comunicación efectiva, favorece la construcción de un entorno de confianza que facilita el acompañamiento emocional de los cuidadores a lo largo del proceso de atención médica. Conclusión: los cuidados pediátricos mejora significativamente el bienestar emocional, familiar y espiritual. Una atención empática, comunicativa y respetuosa reduce el estrés, la ansiedad y la vulnerabilidad en los pacientes y sus familias. Por lo que, la implementación del modelo de puertas abiertas promueve la participación familiar, mejora la evolución clínica y optimiza los resultados del tratamiento al integrar a la familia en el cuidado.

Palabras clave: Ansiedad; Cuidado Humanizado; Cuidadores; Pediatría.

INTRODUCTION

Humanized care centered on the family seeks the active participation of the family members in the infant's health-illness process; however, pediatric critical care services present significant limitation on an open door model that makes this possible; taking into account that according to the World Health Organization (WHO) it is estimated that 5,2 million children under five years old and 500 000 children from 5 to 9 years old died, mainly due to preventable and treatable causes due to family absenteeism.(1)

On the other hand, in Colombia, it is evident that 68 % of patients do not receive humanized care, primarily due to the nurse-patient relationship and the lack of effective teaching and learning. In addition, in Brazil, hospitalization and illness interrupt the daily routine at home, which causes the pediatric patient to become distanced from family, school, and friends.(2,3)

Although the pandemic environment significantly impacted the delivery of services with rules and restrictions imposed during COVID-19, this visualized numerous challenges which were addressed by the authorities and healthcare personnel with the resources available at the time, this evidences the inherent need to update protocols and programs, as well as policies that promote the incorporation of family members in the care of this priority group.(4,5)

On the other hand, the pediatric intensive care ward represents an environment that conveys severity, invasiveness, and risk of death, which makes it necessary to provide specific humanized care, such as companionship, emotional support, and spiritual support. The pediatric area is based on maintaining fundamental values such as respect and integrity of the individual involving scientific knowledge and human values, which raises the need to personalize care according to the individual needs of each patient with emphasis on the subjective experience of the disease and how health personnel contribute to the patient's understanding and coping with this process.(6,7,8)

Finally, humanized care in pediatrics focuses on the patient, but operates differently, since it is not limited only to the link established between the nursing staff and the infant. It is essential to involve the family in the care process, establishing a collaborative relationship among the nurse, family, and patient. This interaction is necessary to provide comprehensive care that is sensitive to the child's needs.(9,10,11,12)

The previous literature reviewed highlights the inherent need to enhance care for infants and their families; therefore, the objective was to analyze the scientific evidence on humanized care in pediatric care services, as well as its impact on emotional, family, and spiritual levels.

METHODS

This is a qualitative approach that seeks to interpret meanings and contexts through critical reflection, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of care in pediatric services.(13)

I adopted a descriptive design as a methodological strategy, which provided a comprehensive and detailed view of the current situation regarding the topic of study. This design focused on identifying, organizing, and synthesizing the findings of previous studies to provide a solid base through a rigorous and exhaustive search of the information. On the other hand, the literature review allowed the researcher to understand the current state of knowledge regarding the topic of study, ensuring that the results are relevant and contextualized within the current scientific landscape.(13)

The population consists of a set of study elements that present common characteristics. In this case, the sample consisted of 82 articles from indexed sources, from which a sample of 30 articles was selected through convenience sampling, based on availability, ease of access, and adherence to the selection requirements.(13)

Inclusion Criteria

- Original research addressing the pediatric area.
- Articles in English, Spanish and Portuguese
- Temporality of the last 5 years.

Exclusion Criteria

- Experimental studies
- Clinical trials
- Review articles
- Studies from institutional repositories

The data were obtained from indexed databases such as SCIELO, SCOPUS, PUBMED, and REDALYC, integrating keywords in English (care, humanized, pediatric, family, emotional, spiritual), Spanish (cuidado, humanizado, pediátrico, familia, emocional, espiritual), and Portuguese (cuidado, humanizado, pediátrico, familia, emocional, espiritual); as well as Boolean operators (AND and OR). The information was validated by another researcher, who was responsible for ensuring compliance with the selection criteria.

In addition, the data were recorded in an Excel matrix that included information on authors, year of publication, title, abstract, methods, findings, conclusions, and references. This organization made it possible to organize the studies according to the questions posed.

For the analysis of the information, a critical and reflective reading was conducted, focusing on the fulfillment of the selection criteria, as well as the application of the CASPe method rubric. This method, used for reading and analysis, facilitates a reflective evaluation of the quality of the selected articles through a checklist.

DEVELOPMENT

Impact of Humanized Care in Pediatric Services

Humanized care in pediatric services has a profound impact on both patients and their families, centered on the importance of a close and empathetic relationship with health professionals, through addressing the tangible as well as emotional needs of patients, thereby improving the quality of life for both the child and their family. Nurses must work collaboratively with other healthcare professionals to foster a mutually supportive environment that benefits both patients and their caregivers.(14)

It should be noted that the humanization of pediatric care remains complex; its application in children's services has a considerable effect on the family environment, as it fosters the emotional well-being of both the patient and caregivers, thereby strengthening emotional relationships during the hospitalization process.(15)

Similarly, this approach implies an active collaboration between health personnel, especially in critical units such as the PICU (Pediatric Intensive Care Units); by fostering a supportive and communicative relationship between staff and family members, which contributes to improving both the quality of care and the patient's health outcomes; thus facilitating the adaptation of these to tricky situations and improving their experience during the care process.(16)

In this sense, in the case of pediatric pathologies, a reorganization occurs within the household, where one of the members, usually a parent, assumes the role of the child's informal caregiver. This new role entails a redistribution of family responsibilities, alterations in support bonds, and a reconfiguration of family dynamics.(17)

In turn, this affects the well-being of caregivers, particularly in terms of their emotional and physical health. This type of care not only focuses on the patient's health and nutritional status, but also on the impact it has on family caregivers, since caring for a child with complex conditions can generate considerable stress and affect the physical and emotional health of family members.(18)

It should be noted that hospitalization of children has a considerable impact on the quality of life of children and their families. This process is full of fear and uncertainty, and requires the support of professionals to manage both the physical and emotional aspects; in addition, constant medical visits, medication administration, and frequent hospitalizations alter family dynamics, which affects the social development of children and generates considerable stress in caregivers. Therefore, humanized care plays a crucial role in this context, providing support to both patients and their families, improving their experience during treatment, and contributing to more comprehensive health management.(19)

Similarly, the effects on mental health can manifest in symptoms such as lethargy, anxiety, loneliness, stress, and sadness. These emotional aspects not only harm the child facing the disease but also profoundly affect their families, who experience constant concern for their children's well-being. All this highlights the importance of providing humanized care, which considers not only the clinical needs but also the emotional support of pediatric patients and their families.(20)

Therefore, early childhood care focuses not only on the child's development and learning, but also on education and support for the family, considering the family as a key support system in the child's development process, as well as participation in decision-making. Contributing to integral support in the child's development, which improves both the child's well-being and that of the family as a whole.(21)

Therefore, it strengthens the bond between healthcare personnel and the family, promoting

an environment of trust, containment, and support that favors the child's recovery and the emotional balance of family members.(22)

In this context, it is essential that the healthcare team not only focuses on clinical treatment but also offers sensitive accompaniment to family members. Humanized care enables caregivers to feel understood and supported, thereby reducing emotional stress and strengthening their ability to cope with the situation, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being of the family environment.(23)

Therefore, humanized care in pediatric services has a profoundly positive impact at the family level. This approach, centered on respect, empathy, and effective communication, generates an environment of trust between health personnel and caregivers. As a result, families feel more supported, understood, and secure during their child's care process. This type of care reduces the perception of vulnerability and facilitates better adaptation to challenging situations, which in turn improves adherence to treatment and the child's recovery from illnesses.

The Influence of Humanized Care on the Emotional Well-being of Family Members in Pediatric Services

Humanized care can be defined as the integration of scientific knowledge and human values to provide quality, person-centered care. This approach involves caring for the child, their family, and the community by recognizing the dignity of each person, valuing their health needs, and understanding their emotional responses to illness. Humane treatment becomes a key element in the recovery process, not only for pediatric patients but also for their families.(24)

It should be emphasized that quality of life in pediatric care represents a considerable challenge, given the complexity inherent in the specific needs of children throughout the various phases of their growth. In this context, the implementation of a humanized care model, which involves the family in the care process, significantly contributes to improving the emotional well-being not only of the pediatric patient but also of their caregivers. This strategy promotes a therapeutic environment based on trust and mutual support.(25)

In this sense, humanized care in pediatric services not only focuses on the physical and emotional well-being of the child but also plays a crucial role in the emotional well-being of family members. By recognizing parents and caregivers as an integral part of the care process, which contributes to reducing the stress and anxiety they commonly experience when coping with the disease.(26)

In addition, caregivers face emotional challenges due to their children's health conditions. This psychological burden not only affects the emotional well-being of family members but can also influence children's adherence to treatment, hindering their health-related well-being. Humanized care can help alleviate and improve the experience of caregivers.(27)

That is why humanized care not only considers the clinical needs of the child but also their emotional and social needs, extending that care to their family members as well. By designing inclusive and empathetic spaces that respond to the unique needs of children, a harmonious family-centered environment is promoted, which favors coping with the health-illness process.(28)

Thus, it aims to enhance the experience of all parties involved in the care process, including patients, their families, healthcare personnel, managers, and volunteers. In the pediatric setting, this approach is critical, as it recognizes the emotional burden faced by family members when accompanying a child during their illness. By providing empathetic, respectful treatment that focuses on the needs of both the child and their family environment, humanized care helps reduce the feeling of helplessness in caregivers.(29)

It is worth noting that humanization has a significant positive impact on the emotional well-being of family members in pediatric services, as it fosters an environment of trust, empathy, and closeness. This provides a warmer and more personalized care for patients and caregivers, who often experience high levels of stress and worry.(30)

For this reason, family coping in pediatric services is strengthened when the perceptions of family members are taken into account, especially those of key figures such as the mother or the person who assumes the central role of caregiver. Humanized care contributes to this process by valuing the emotions, experiences, and needs of the family, which enables the establishment of closer and more effective communication between the family and healthcare personnel, facilitating their ability to face the child's health situation with greater security and resilience.(31)

In this context, humanized care is crucial, as it provides an environment of emotional support, clear communication, and constant accompaniment. When parents feel understood, informed, and supported by the healthcare team, they experience reduced stress, which improves their emotional

well-being and enables them to participate more actively in their child's care.(32)

In turn, humanized care in pediatric services recognizes the importance of the emotional state of parents, as the proper management of their emotions directly influences their well-being. Therefore, when parents feel supported and emotionally available, the child experiences a calmer and more positive environment, which contributes to their recovery process.(33)

Thus, humanized care plays a key role in improving the emotional well-being of family members in pediatric services. This type of care reduces anxiety and stress by reassuring them that their loved one is being comprehensively cared for. In addition, empathy and active listening on the part of the medical and nursing staff promote greater confidence in the treatment and in the healthcare personnel. Thus, humanized care contributes to a more positive environment that encourages family resilience. In this way, the emotional well-being of family members is strengthened, enabling them to cope more effectively with the challenges of caring for the child patient.

Impact of humanized care on the spiritual well-being of family members in pediatric services

Humanized care in pediatric services has a positive impact on the spiritual well-being of family members, as it plays a crucial role in the lives of parents caring for children with illnesses, enabling them to cope with suffering and find meaning in these experiences. Likewise, it provides personalized care, which is essential during the disease process, since it focuses not only on the patient but also on their family members, who face a considerable emotional burden.(34,35)

It should be noted that the humanization of care creates a therapeutic environment in which caregivers feel that they are not alone, that their emotions and spirituality are recognized and accompanied. This contributes to alleviating suffering, promoting hope, and giving meaning to the caregiving experience, thus facilitating a more empathetic, comprehensive, and holistic accompaniment. Religiosity and spirituality emerge as significant resources for coping with illness and preserving quality of life in child hospitalization contexts.(36,37)

Likewise, spiritual beliefs enable people to interpret the meaning of life events, especially those that are painful or distressing, and foster an optimistic attitude and a sense of mental well-being, thus enhancing the experience of children, but also that of parents, who experience greater hope, comfort and connection to their religious beliefs, by focusing on the emotional and spiritual dimensions of family members, facilitating them to find strength and meaning amid adversity, which in turn strengthens their ability to face the disease process with greater resilience.(38,39)

Therefore, spiritual aspects contribute significantly to individuals feeling better about themselves, serving as a therapeutic tool, a source of emotional relief, and a means of strengthening their families, who undergo the disease process from a place of vulnerability in pediatric services. For this reason, an environment of trust, respect, and emotional support is provided. Recognizing the individuality and essence of the human being, which enables the expression of emotions, finding comfort, and facing situations with greater hope.(40,41)

In this context, the concepts of well-being and quality of life are closely related and are influenced by multiple factors, including the sense of community, social integration, socioeconomic and labor status, as well as the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social functioning that the person perceives.(42,43)

Therefore, humanized care in pediatric services enhances the spiritual well-being of family members by providing an empathetic, understanding, and respectful environment where both emotional suffering and personal beliefs are validated. This type of care promotes open communication between health personnel and family members, generating trust and decreasing anxiety associated with the infant's health status.

CONCLUSIONS

Humanized care in pediatric care has a significant and positive impact on emotional, family, and spiritual well-being. The findings demonstrate that empathic, communicative, and respectful care contributes to reducing stress in pediatric patients and their families, thereby reducing anxiety and feelings of vulnerability.

Therefore, the implementation of the open door model as a standardized protocol would strengthen the active presence of family members during the care process, the improvement of clinical evolution during hospital stay and participation in decision making, an approach that not only increases adherence to treatment, but also optimizes clinical outcomes by integrating the family as a fundamental part of humanized care.

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