Non-pharmacological pain management

Children’s Pain Management Service
Royal Children’s Hospital
Painful procedures

During painful procedures children can exhibit:

• stress
• fear
• anxiety
Result of stress, fear and anxiety

• Abnormal pain behaviours
• Post-traumatic stress disorder in severe cases
• Enormous implications for the child, family and all hospital staff involved with these children on subsequent encounters
Non-pharmacological interventions

- Can be used with or without pharmacological support
- Variety of techniques
- Effective as coping strategies
- Help make pain more tolerable
For optimal efficacy

Non-pharmacological interventions need:
• to be taught to parents and children
• to be taught to health professionals

Experience for advanced interventions is necessary for:
• guided imagery
• hypnosis
Goals of non-pharmacological interventions

• To minimise fear and distress
• To make pain more tolerable
• To give the child a sense of control over the situation and their behaviour
• To teach and enhance coping strategies for the child
• To instruct parents in techniques to assist their child
Outcomes of successful non-pharmacological strategies

• To have a cooperative, calm, non-traumatised child
• To complete medical procedures successfully in a timely manner
• To have subsequent procedures performed with reduced fear and anxiety
Indications

• The medical procedure should not be complex or prolonged
• The child needs to be willing to participate
• Pharmacological strategies should be considered as well
Contraindications

• Non-pharmacological techniques should **NOT** be attempted during painful procedures without prior instruction and co-operation
  • Surgical procedures
  • Complex and/or long procedures
  • Distressed, un-cooperative child
Non-pharmacological techniques everyone can implement

- Information: explain, explain, explain…
- Parents’ presence
- Choices and control
- Laughter and fun
- Deep breathing
- Heat / Cold
Diversion

- Choices and control
- Diversion / distraction
- Play / relaxation
- Videos / DVDs / computer games
Controlled breathing

- Bubbles
- Breathing
- Blowing
Comforting touch

• Cuddles
• Stroking
• Massage
• Holding
• Rocking
Imagination

- Story telling / books
- Guided imagery
- Favourite activity
- Magic
Give information

• Explain at a level:
  • the child can understand
  • the child wants to know
  • involve the parents
Relaxation

- Deep breathing
- Relaxing from head to toe
- Music
• RCH procedural pain management info:

• Hospital Policy on Procedural Pain Management
Finally…

Optimal pain management is the right of all patients and the responsibility of all health professionals.