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AWARENESS AND APPLICATIONS OF ATTENDANT PARENTS CONCERNING THE RISK OF FALL IN PEDIATRIC PATIENT POPULATION

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Abstract

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Objective: This study was implemented for the purpose of determining the awareness and applications of attendant parents concerning the falls in pediatric population and precautions to be taken.

Methods: The descriptive and cross-sectional study was carried out with 350 attendant parents in pediatry clinics of a public hospital in Afyonkarahisar between 01.01.2019-01.04.2019. The data were gathered via data collection form consisting of three parts and Harizmi Fall Risk Scale.

Results: It was determined that majority of the attendant parents were women (92.8%) and mothers of the pediatric patients (82.6%). It was determined that only 61.4% of the attendant parents had been informed by clinical nurses on adaptation to clinic and patient room in case of hospitalization, whereas 42.3% had not been informed on the prevention of the risk of fall in the child attended. It was found that 58.9% of the pediatric patients who were attended had a higher risk of fall and their score average of the risk of fall was 22.43 ± 5.07 . It was determined that the attendant parents had higher awareness and applications concerning risk factors which could arise from the hospital environment and there were nonsufficient applications aimed at individual risk factors of fall concerning children and parent-related preventive behaviors.

Conclusion: It was concluded that parents attending pediatric patients did not have sufficient levels of awareness and applications concerning risk factors that could cause children to fall and there was a need for training.

Keywords: Falls, patient safety, pediatric nursing, harizmi fall risk scale

Introduction

Although falls are preventable as long as necessary precautions are taken, they are frequently reported within the scope of undesirable incidents which are commonly encountered in hospitalized patients worldwide, continue to be a costly patient security problem in terms of its possible consequences and threat patient security.¹⁻³ It is reported that falls and falls-related injuries that occur in hospitalized patients are more common in the adult and geriatric patient populations and it is known that an important part of falls occurs in the pediatric patient population.⁴⁻⁸ Parents attending on pediatric patients in the hospital are accepted to be one of the most important environmental factors in terms of preventing the risk of fall.^{5,9,10} It has been reported that stress and anxiety levels and habits of parents directly affect their children's

care.¹⁰⁻¹² In a study conducted, it was reported that majority of the falls occurring in the pediatric patient population occurred in the presence of a parent.¹³ Chang et al. determined that patients in the age group of 0-6 years were in tendency to fall even under the care of their parents and there was a significant correlation between age and presence/absence of parents.³ Results of the study conducted by Almis et al. show that attendant parents play an important role in falls occurring in hospitalized children and there is a statistically significant difference between pediatric patient groups who experience and do not experience falls, in terms of the characteristics of parents such as educational level and habit of smoking.⁹ In addition, it is known that raising awareness of falls and their possible consequences in parents and/or attendant family members may reduce the rates of falls that hospitalized patients could face.¹³

Objectives

In the study, it was aimed to determine the awareness and applications of attendant parents, who are accepted to be one of the most important environmental factors in terms of preventing the risk of fall in hospitalized children, regarding falls in the pediatric population and precautions to be taken and also to provide scientific data to the literature on this matter.

Methods

The study was carried out as a descriptive and cross-sectional study in pediatric clinics of a state hospital in the province of Afyonkarahisar between the dates 01.01.2019-01.04.2019. Among 570 parents who were present as attendants for the hospitalized pediatric patient population during the aforementioned dates and agreed to participate in the study; 350 constituted the study sample. In the study, data were acquired with a data collection tool which was prepared in line with a literature^{8,9,11,12,14,15} review and expert opinion and consisted of three sections as Parental Introductory Information Form, Fall Awareness Evaluation Form and the Form for Evaluating Parents' Applications to Prevent Falls, as well as the Harizmi Fall Risk Scale. The study data were analyzed with the SPSS version 20.0 (Armonk, NY: IBM Corp) package software using descriptive statistics. In order to conduct the study, a research ethics committee approval (2018/44) was received besides a written permission, which was obtained from the institution where the study was conducted. In addition, the attendant parents who participated in the study were informed about the aim of the study and their verbal consents were received.

Results

It was determined that among the attendant parents who were included in the study; 92.8% were women, 43.7% were in the age group of 20-30 years and majority of them (82.6%) were mothers of the child attended. It was found that more than half of the participants (58.3%) had been attending on their children in the hospital for 3-5 days and 89.4% attended on only one child. It was seen that while only 61.4% of the attendant parents were informed by the clinic nurse about adjustment to the clinic and sick room at the beginning of hospitalization, 42.3% were not informed about the prevention of the risk of fall in the child they attended. It was determined that falls occurred in 4.9% of the children attended throughout hospitalization and 8 out of 14 children had fallen on the second day of hospitalization. More than half of the attendant parents (57.1%) stated that they had picked their children up on their own after the falls. It was found that majority of the attendant parents gave the answer "Disagree/No idea" to the statements, "lack of knowledge in the attendant parent concerning fall will increase the child's risk of fall" (79.1%), "some drugs used in the child's treatment will increase the risk of fall" (74.3%) and "the child's presence in an unfamiliar environment will increase the risk of fall" (58.3%) and they had insufficient information about awareness concerning these areas and factors of the risk of fall.

Discussion

In the literature, it is reported that an unfamiliar hospital environment may increase the risk of fall in patients even further.¹⁶ Thus, it is important to perform interventions for both patients and attendant parents to adjust to the hospital environment. Examining the applications of parents aiming to prevent the risk of fall in the children they attend; it has been determined that majority of attendant parents have insufficient levels of parent-related applications aiming to prevent the risk of fall, such as using the call bell to reach out to the nurse and not leaving the child alone on the bed. These behaviors may cause the child attended to be left alone, become open to dangers and fall indirectly. In the study conducted by Almis et al., it was reported that the risk of fall was six times higher in children of attendants who had smoking habit and would leave their children alone.⁹ Chang et al. determined that falls in the age group of 0-6 years occurred as a result of jumping off or falling down the bed when they were left alone.³ Also in other studies, it was

reported that falling down the bed or any height created important falling conditions especially in patients under 5 years of age.^{5,6,17}

Evaluating the results obtained from the study; it is seen that parents attending pediatric patient population do not have sufficient awareness of individual risk factors that may cause falls in children and applications to prevent the risk of fall that may arise from parents and thus, they need to be trained. It is recommended that healthcare professionals evaluate the needs of parents, consider their individual characteristics such as educational level and habits and perform interventions to increase the awareness of parents in order to prevent falls that may arise from the caregivers of pediatric patients.

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