An exploration of adult-trained perioperative nurses’ practice of family-centered care in an acute Irish regional hospital.

Gráinne Hamilton, Senior Staff Nurse, Trauma and Orthopaedic Theatres, Sligo Regional Hospital, Ireland.

What is Family-Centered Care?

- FCC is an approach to caring for children and their families where care is planned around the whole family, not just the individual child
  
  *(Shields et al, 2006)*

- It is widely accepted in paediatric practice as the best method of caring for hospitalised children and their families
  
  *(Chorney & Kain, 2010)*
What is Family-Centered Care?

- Successful FCC delivery is dependent on positive attitudes from both healthcare professionals and parents alike.

- It requires healthcare professionals to have complex communication and negotiation skills.

Family-Centered Perioperative Care Model

(Chorney & Kain, 2010)
Study Background

➢ Practice observation suggested that the extent of family involvement in the perioperative setting can be dependent on the judgement and attitudes of the individual nurse present during the care process.

Study Background

➢ Many regional hospitals in Ireland provide surgical care for children in operating theatres that cater predominately for adult patients

(Zgraj et al., 2010)
Study Background

➤ Many of the perioperative nurses involved in the care process are adult-trained and unfamiliar with the concept of FCC (Smith & Dearnum, 2007)

➤ An extensive literature search failed to uncover any studies of adult-trained perioperative nurses’ practice of FCC.

Study Aim

➤ To gain a deeper understanding of adult-trained perioperative nurses’ experiences of family-centered practice.
Study Design

- Qualitative research design.
- Phenomenological-hermeneutic approach
- Guided by Heideggerian philosophy.

Phenomenological-hermeneutics is a form of interpretive phenomenology designed to unveil otherwise concealed meanings in a phenomena.

This approach was chosen because it enabled comprehensive descriptions of the reality of practice as lived by perioperative nurses.
Purposeful homogenous sampling was used to recruit 6 participants from a sample of 13 volunteers who expressed an interest in participating in the study.

Participants were chosen to represent varying levels of professional experience and parental status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 20 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Own Children</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study Design

- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six adult-trained perioperative nurses.

- Data analysis was guided by Colaizzi’s 7-step framework for the analysis of qualitative data.

Study Design

1. Interviews were transcribed.

2. Following several focused readings of the data, significant statements and phrases were extracted.

3. Patterns of meaningful connection were established.

4. These were organised into themes and sub-themes.
Perioperative FCC: Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme 1: Attitudes to FCC
Support and empathy.
Own parental status

Theme 2: Challenges to FCC provision
Lack of paediatric experience/qualification
Dealing with anxious parents

Theme 3: Resources to support FCC
Education of nurses
Education of parents and children
Staffing levels
Physical environment

Study Design

5. Rich descriptions of perioperative nurses’ experiences of family-centered practice were developed.


7. Participant validation confirmed that the researcher’s interpretations were an accurate reflection of their experiences.
Study Findings

**Theme 1: Attitudes to FCC**

- All of the participants articulated strong support for FCC as a philosophy of care;
  
  ‘It’s a very important part of the nursing we do’

- They demonstrated empathy with families;
  
  ‘It’s very hard as a parent to walk away and leave your child with somebody’

- Three nurses who had children of their own felt that being a parent enabled them to show more empathy.

- One participant, who was not a parent, felt this left them at a disadvantage;
  
  ‘I’m the least knowledgeable person to be asking such questions off’

- Another participant who was not a parent expressed the opposite view;
  
  ‘It doesn’t make you any better of a nurse because you have children’
Theme 2: Challenges to FCC provision

- While participants supported the principle of family involvement in care, they found its implementation in practice difficult and stressful;

‘Sometimes, depending on the child’s age, it would engender a … fear’

- Participants reported that families sometimes appeared inadequately prepared for the surgical experience;

‘There is the odd time when I feel the parents are very stressed themselves and they maybe don’t handle it very well.’
Study Findings

➢ Subsequent poor experiences for families caused feelings of upset and inadequacy for nurses;

‘A parent fainting out in the corridor … that was pretty traumatic’

‘She (child) screamed and screamed and her mother was in tears and it was just a terrible, terrible thing’

Study Findings

Theme 3: Resources to support FCC

➢ Staffing levels,
➢ Education,
➢ Infrastructure,
➢ Physical resources;

or a lack thereof were all identified as impediments to effective perioperative FCC;

‘…there are often days when you don’t have the extra pair of hands to mind mum or dad.’ [in the anaesthetic room]
Study Findings

‘More education…would certainly help. I hadn’t heard of it [FCC] until you mentioned it.’

‘…it’s before they [families] come to theatre at all they need to be properly prepared…pre-op preparation of the parents as well as the children.’

Recommendations for Practice


- Inclusion of FCC in induction programmes for adult-trained perioperative nurses who are expected to care for children.
Recommendations for Practice

- Continuing education for staff focusing on skills necessary for constructive communication with families.

- A recognition by organisations that FCC involves providing care for the family as well as the child, and staffing levels must reflect this reality.

Recommendations for Practice

- Further research to identify learning needs and support practice changes.
References


