

Postoperative Emergence Delirium in Children: An Incomprehensible Scenario For Parents'

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Abstract : Background: Emergence delirium is a well-known behaviour of perceptual disturbances that may occur after general anaesthesia in children. Children with emergence delirium are often confused; they cry, are involuntarily physically active and are almost impossible to console. The prevalence varies considerably between about 13% and 53%. Research has mainly focused on how different medication accents affect the incidence of emergence delirium, but less is known about parents' experiences of emergence delirium during the recovery process. Aim: The aim of this study was to describe parents' experiences and reflections during their child's emergence delirium behaviour when recovering from anaesthesia. Method: The study has a qualitative design, and the data has been analyzed using thematic analysis. A total of 16 parents were interviewed at two county hospitals in Sweden. Results: When the parents reunited with their child at the recovering unit, they felt as if they were encountering an incomprehensible scenario. When watching their child demonstrating emergence delirium, they experienced fear and insecurity and had feelings of powerlessness and guilt. Information and previous experience turned out to offer relief and being seen by the healthcare staff when they, in their vulnerability, failed to reach or console their child gave hope and energy. Conclusion: Emergence delirium must be extensively considered in children undergoing general anaesthesia. Healthcare staff needs to be aware of the parental difficulties it may cause. There is also important to know what parents experience as relieving, such as receiving information and when staff members are being available, responsive and supportive during the wake-up period.

Keywords : emergence delirium, experiences, pediatrics, parents, postoperative care

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