



# The Child and Hospitalization in Covid Times

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### Book Review

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## Abstract

**Background:** Family functions include the protection of its members and the development of affection among all. The child requires this feeling of belonging, but when the situation of illness arises with the subsequent need for hospitalization, the moment becomes stressful and distressing for the whole family.

**Objective:** To reflect on the child's hospitalization process, its consequences and the strategies to minimize this experience, with family involvement, especially with the situation of the Covid pandemic.

**Methods:** Bibliographic review, with descriptive analysis.

**Results:** Reactions to hospitalization are varied and arise due to the uprooting of the child in relation to their context, cultural and family reality. The child may present immediate problems at the time of separation, or later, with varying behaviors related to age, personality, parent/child relationship, parents, reaction to the illness/hospitalization, the child's degree of information and the duration of hospitalization. It is important to create an appropriate hospital climate to support the child/family.

**Conclusion:** Creating a relationship of trust to combat hospital stress allows the elimination and reduction of negative experiences and fears, so there should be a relationship of partnership and family involvement, contributing to the safety and adaptation of the child in his health/illness/hospitalization transition process.

**Keywords:** Hospitalization; Internment; Child, Hospitalism; COVID-19

## Introduction

Being fundamental pillars of family functions, the protection of its members and the development of affections to promote socialization and trust, as well as the creation of feelings of belonging to the group [1] and requiring the child this feeling of belonging, in order to grow in safety, with tranquility and assured stability, when the situation of illness arises with the subsequent need for hospitalization, the moment becomes stressful and distressing for the whole family [2]. Thus, it is important to reflect on the child's hospitalization process, its consequences and the strategies to minimize this experience, with family involvement,

especially with the situation of the Covid pandemic.

## Materials and Methods

Bibliographic review, with descriptive analysis.

## Results and Discussion

When the disease appears in a family member, it is a cause for concern for the other members, especially if it affects a child [3]. Reactions to hospitalization are varied and go through stages inherent to separation, with revolt and protest attitudes, a phase of despair and disinterest, and

hospitality. This arises when the child's uprooting begins to appear in relation to his/her cultural/family context/reality [2], realizing that it worsens when the pandemic situation implies physical removal. The cognitive/social development of the child determines the way he will interpret, understand and accept the situation that appears, as well as the construction of meanings about the disease and the consequent and required hospitalization, being important to involve the family members early in the whole process, with information that allows them to adapt to the life process that the clinical situation imposes [4].

In the face of hospitalization, the child may present immediate problems at the time of separation, with behaviors that include screaming, crying and refusals or later, with varied behaviors, which may include food refusal, sphincter regression, depressive states, sleep and behavior changes, being that these scenarios will be directly related to the age factor, personality, parent/child relationship, parents' reaction to the disease/hospitalization, the child's degree of information and the duration of hospitalization. If the child's postures/reactions vary with age, and for the little ones the mother-child separation is a more vulnerable period, from school age onwards, the consequences are less serious because the child perceives reality more and apprehends it [2]. Since it is important to create an adequate hospital climate to support the child/family, the factors that favor good experiences may include liberalizing visiting policies (pets, colleagues), parental presence, creating a pleasant environment, play rooms with toys, knowing how the child likes and is usually treated, involving them during the hospitalization process, using clear questions to see the degree of understanding, calm tone of voice, respecting silences, times, verbalizations, postures, having permanent availability for parents, provide illustrated and audiovisual material alluding to the hospital/facilities/treatments. All this must be properly adapted to the times of a pandemic, with reinforcement of later disinfection protocols.

## Conclusion

Creating a relationship of trust to combat hospital stress, allows eliminating and reducing negative experiences, fears, doubts at different ages, through facilitating means of communication, facilitating adaptation to hospitalization. Implementing adequate programs, creating safe environments, investing in simulations and interactions that encourage the play inherent to the child's normal activity, to explain therapeutic procedures and demystify equipment, providing relaxation, less anxiety related to separation/sickness, are fundamental [5]. If the process must be based on the creation of a soft, friendly, colorful environment, which is intended to be safe and as healthy as possible, contributing to a more familiar and peaceful atmosphere for hospitalized children, there must be a relationship of partnership and family involvement, fostering their training and decision-making, contributing to the safety and adaptation of the child in his/her health/disease/hospitalization transition process [2].

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