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## THE QUALITY OF PAEDIATRIC NURSING CARE - CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this three-phase study was to describe children's expectations and evaluations concerning the quality of paediatric nursing care and to develop a quality instrument for hospitalized school-age children. The aim of the study was to improve the quality of paediatric nursing in hospital.

In the first phase, data were collected through theme interviews and children's drawings from 20 preschool-age children (4 to 6 years) and 20 school-age children (7 to 11 years). The data were analysed by using content analysis. The children's expectations concerning the quality of nursing care were related to the nurse, nursing activities and environment; the physical environment was emphasized in drawings.

On the basis of the results of the first phase, as well as earlier literature and Leino-Kilpi's "Good Nursing Care" Scale, the instrument "Child Care Quality at Hospital" (CCQH) was developed and its psychometrics tested in the second phase. First, an expert panel (n=7) assessed the content of the instrument. Second, the instrument was pilot-tested twice by collecting data from hospitalized school-age children (n=41 and n=16); in the same step the content validity of the instrument was assessed by nurses (n=19) from five wards together and by children (n=8). Finally, the instrument was tested with hospitalized school-age children (n=388), and nurses (n=198) assessed the content validity of the instrument. During the development process of the instrument, the main quality categories - nurse characteristics, nursing activities, and nursing environment Cronbach's alpha values - improved. The principal component analysis supported the theoretical construct of the subcategories in nursing activities and environment.

In the third phase, data were collected with the CCQH III (version four) from the paediatric clinics of the five university hospitals in Finland from school-age children (n=388) aged 7 to 11. At the end of the instrument there were two sentence completions in which children were asked to describe their best and worst experiences during hospitalization. The data were analysed using statistical methods and content analysis. The children rated the physical nursing environment, nurses' humanity and trustworthiness, and caring and communication as excellent. They gave the lowest ratings to nurses' entertainment activities. The age of the child and type of admission were both related to the amount of information they received. Children's best experiences were related to people, their characteristics, activities, environment and outcomes. The worst experiences were related to being a patient, feelings related to symptoms of illness and separation, the physical care and treatment activities of nursing and to environment.

The study showed that children are capable of evaluating their care, and their perspectives should be seen as part of the entire quality development process to improve quality in practice with a more genuinely child-centred approach. The instrument CCQH is a potential tool for obtaining knowledge about children's evaluations of the quality of paediatric nursing care, but more testing should be done in the future.

**Keywords:** paediatric nursing, quality of nursing care, quality of health care, child, instrument