

Prolonged hospitalization effects on psychosocial development in chronic illness pediatric populations

Abstract

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Background/Objective: Frequent and extensive hospitalizations have a negative impact on the psychosocial development of children in the most formative years of their lives. This problem is most evident in children who have chronic disease or health conditions that require multiple hospital stays and interventions. This topic can be considered broad because of the extensive variety of chronic conditions and how that determines a child's length of stay. This study aims to identify whether patient-to-patient interaction impacts the psychosocial development in children who experience these extended and repetitive hospitalizations.

Methods: Research was guided by the John Hopkins Evidence-Based Practice Model. Google Scholar, EBSCOHost, and PubMed were the databases used to search for key terms which included “prolonged hospitalization”, “chronic illnesses”, “psychosocial development”, “pediatric”, “school-aged”, and “chronic”. Only relevant evidence data from the last five years are analyzed to ensure the validity of the study and uncover the best evidence-based practice to implement.

Results: A total of ten articles were appraised for the study. The following themes were identified: prolonged hospitalizations led to social developmental delays, there is an increased risk of delay in developmental milestones, and peer group interventions are recommended for better outcomes. Depending on the age, severity of illness, and peer interactions, children’s development is affected.

Conclusion: Prolonged hospitalizations affect children's ability to reach developmental milestones. There are many different factors that play a role in reaching development milestones, and healthcare providers need to consider these factors in developing evidence-based interventions appropriate for this group.