

A Thematic Analysis of the Experiences of Parents and Carers of Children in Hospital

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Introduction

Positive experiences in hospital are important indicators of healthcare quality which is a fundamental aspect of practising medicine. Illness exerts a great deal of psychological distress on patients and families but in paediatric settings, it's especially important to minimise stress of parents and carers as they are putting their child's health into another person's care.

The aim of this project was to investigate the experience of parents and carers of children in hospital and gather their suggestions on how to alleviate potential concerns.

Methods

Participants

- Participants were selected by opportunity sampling.
- Interviews were conducted in the; Paediatric assessment unit, General Children's Ward, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and The Post-natal Ward.

Procedure

- 15 preliminary interviews were conducted, from this a standardised questionnaire was produced.
- 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted in pairs using the questionnaire.
- The interviews were transcribed, and the recording was deleted as per participant confidentiality agreement. This was done within 24 hours.

Data analysis

- The transcriptions were coded and categorised to assess frequency of the topics that were raised.
- Themes were then formulated from the categorised codes.

Results

Quality of care

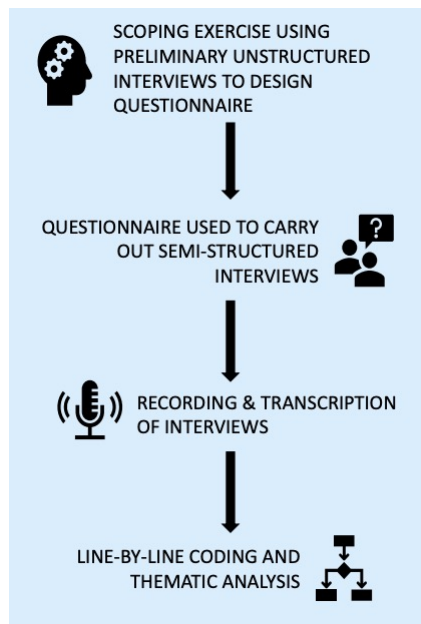
- Largely positive experiences were expressed surrounding the quality of care
- Parents were eager to feel involved and to provide knowledge to help the team

Impact on siblings

- Time distribution between siblings
- Impact on sibling relationships

Hospital facilities

- Car parking – limited availability of parking spaces
- Mixed opinions around the food available



A flow diagram depicting the process of our methodology.

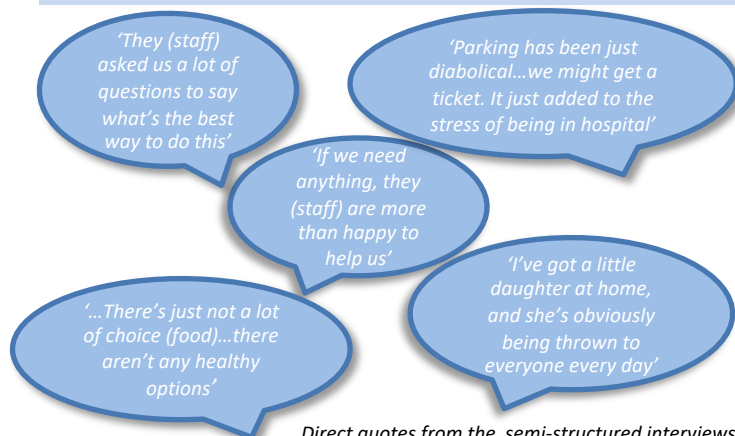
Conclusion

- Transport and accessibility was fundamental in the ease of visiting their child at hospital.
- Competent, caring and honest staff made parents feel involved and valued
- Family life was disrupted

Future work

Implement a new questionnaire to gather specific suggestions for improvement

Work towards improvement of services to ensure parents' and carers' experiences are as positive as possible.



Direct quotes from the semi-structured interviews.

Ethical approval

- Ethical approval to perform this study was provided by the Paediatric Consultant Project Manager.
- Before all interviews, all participants received through verbal information explaining the purpose of the study and the duration of the interview (15-20 minutes).