

# A Human Factors Approach to Improving the Preassessment Anaesthetic Passport Tool for Paediatric Patients with Additional Support Needs

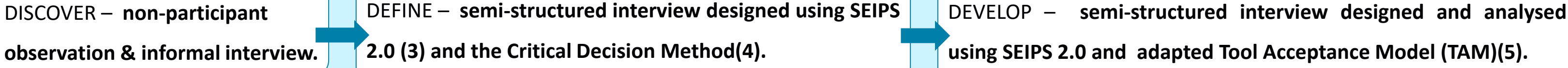
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## Introduction, Aim and Methods

Many patients who visit the Ninewells children’s theatre suite (ward 30) have additional support needs (ASN) and present unique challenges for healthcare staff, and understanding how best to support them can be complex as there is no singular approach(1). Individualised anaesthetic passport tools have been successfully implemented at other hospitals.

**Aim: To improve the preoperative assessment process for patients with additional support needs through the development of an individualised anaesthetic passport tool which ensures staff are better equipped to meet the needs of these individuals and lead to an improved staff and patient-carer unit experience.**

Methods: The double diamond method (2) underpinned the project with the first three phases of the double diamond utilised: Discover, define and develop. At each phase, qualitative data was gathered using the following methods;



The interviews involved 12 healthcare staff (including 2 play specialists, 6 ward nurses and 4 consultant anaesthetists) and 10 patient-carer units.

## Key Findings

- All ward staff highlighted that the current system often does not identify patients with ASN - 50% of staff recalled not receiving any information about patient’s needs prior to their arrival
- 66% of staff recognised that the flow of work can be disrupted by gaps in knowledge of the needs of children with ASN.
- 50% of staff reflected on experiences of patients requiring physical restraint, acknowledging that this can be distressing for all involved.
- 100% of carers of patients were able to detail the patient’s additional needs and highlight strategies to support them.
- 100% of patients used different methods of communication and had varied levels of understanding. 50% used visual communication tools such as PECS.
- 80% of carers felt a visual tool to aid in preparing patients for their visit would be beneficial. One patient’s school had created a personalised ‘social story’ for the patient.
- All patients were affected by sensory needs. However, five (50%) patients had a formal diagnosis of ASD and only two patients were described as having sensory processing disorder. There were three patients who were awaiting a diagnosis/ further review by CAMHS.
- All patient-carer units and staff perceived the anaesthetic passport tool as useful and easy to use.
- One healthcare staff highlighted uncertainty in applying information such as sensory needs and multiple carers highlighted difficulty in communicating sensory needs.
- Play specialists were highlighted by staff as being valuable and relied upon for the management of patients with ASN;

## Final Product

A remit and language emphasising preferences was added to alleviate safety concerns highlighted by staff regarding choice.

*‘I just wonder how we form that into these are preferences, they’re not binding on the clinician who’s looking after you’* Healthcare staff 12 (consultant anaesthetist)

Adding pictures was suggested by 7 carers to promote patient participation as well as simplifying language .

*‘he would probably need some pictures of things to help him with choosing and understanding’* Patient-carer unit 9

It was suggested that the passport could ensure effective communication of needs for both staff and carers.

*‘that’s good questions because sometimes we struggle to find out how their autism affects them.’* Healthcare staff 5 (nurse)

### What Matters to Me?

Tayside Children's Hospital

Think about what is important to you when visiting ward 30 and tell us in the boxes below!




This can help us work together to make a plan. We will try our best to meet your **preferences**, but we will always choose what is the safest option for you!

If you have any questions or would like to have a visit to Ward 30 before your procedure, ask your grown up to call 01382 653850. Remember to bring this with you on the day of your procedure – where you can talk further with our staff members.



What would I like to happen on my journey through the Children's Theatre Suite?


Where would I like to be before my procedure? ☐ I would like to be in a quiet space

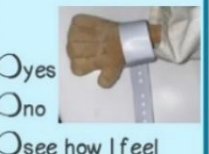
☐ Main waiting area/play den ☐ Sensory room: can be adapted to your preferences ☐ Play area/ computer (game I like: \_\_\_\_\_)



What would I like to wear at the hospital? ☐ My own loose clothes ☐ Hospital gown



☐ With short sleeves 

Will I have numbing cream on my hands? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ See how I feel 

Will I have a name bracelets put around my wrist? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ See how I feel 

Would I like some medicine to help me feel calm/sleepy before my procedure? ☐ yes, calmer ☐ yes, sleepy ☐ no ☐ see how I feel

How do I take my medicine? ☐ liquid medicine ☐ dissolved in juice ☐ tablets ☐ gastrostomy/ PEG ☐ I find taking medicine hard

How would I prefer to go to sleep? ☐ IV (tube on hand) ☐ gas (mask) 

☐ see how I feel

### What Matters to Me?

Tayside Children's Hospital

You may not find everything on this page important. You only have to fill out what matters to you!

Have I had an anaesthetic before? ☐ no ☐ yes, and it went well ☐ yes, but I found it difficult

This is what happened \_\_\_\_\_

What are my sensory needs?

Sensory needs	Like it	Dislike it	Not Bothered
Light			
Noise			
Touch			
Smell			
Taste			

Things I like? \_\_\_\_\_ Things I don't like? \_\_\_\_\_

How do I communicate?

You can tell I am upset or in pain when... \_\_\_\_\_

I get anxious when... \_\_\_\_\_ How do I feel about transitions? ☐ I don't mind ☐ I find them hard

You can help me when I am getting upset by... \_\_\_\_\_

You can help me stay calm by... ☐ using symbols/pictures ☐ giving me a countdown ☐ telling me what will happen next ☐ keeping me distracted ☐ something else ☐ one calm voice helping me (I would like that voice to be \_\_\_\_\_)

After my procedure, I am looking forward to... \_\_\_\_\_

Something else that is important to know about me or my grown-ups... \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Label/ Sticker

I like to be called: \_\_\_\_\_

The grown-ups with me are: \_\_\_\_\_

It was suggested that there could be improvement in list management

*‘can be identified earlier that can then lead to maybe a different planning of the list, just allows extra time to manage the patients better’* Healthcare staff 1 (consultant anaesthetist)

Two patient-carer units and two staff suggested the passport could help ensure carers feel supported

*‘I just would think, he’s been heard, they know he’s got these additional needs and they’re looking to make this the best, the most positive experience, not just, well he’s got autism he’s your problem. I’m saying I think it makes me feel like I’ve got other people on my side.’* Patient-carer unit 3

The qualitative data gathered in the discover and define phases of the double diamond highlighted that Ward 30 faced many challenges which stemmed from core organisational problems such as poor and inconsistent identification and information gathering of patients with ASN and resultant issues in list management.

The develop phase produced a ‘**What Matters to Me**’ individualised anaesthetic passport tool which looks at **procedures, medication intake, environmental/ sensory needs, clothing, communication** and **patient trauma**. A **guidance document for staff** was created to collate the range of management strategies highlighted and to ensure an understanding of why, how and where to introduce a preassessment tool as advised by wider literature(1). Furthermore, a **social story** aimed at outlining the hospital journey was also developed to aid in the preparation of patients with ASN for their visit to Ward 30.

## Recommendations and Areas for Further Research

Implementation of the developed anaesthetic passport tool, named ‘What Matters to Me?’ to improve the preassessment process alongside utilisation of the staff guidance document.

Share the social story with ASN patients during in-person preassessment clinics or on admission to aid in patient preparation for their procedure and upload to Healthzone app for access at home.

Incorporating a total communication approach into daily practise using various communication methods to accommodate the wide range of communication abilities, improve patient understanding and patient voice.

Gathering feedback from patients with ASN on their perioperative experience is less well researched and should be explored further to ensure there is a true understanding of the perspectives of this population.

## References

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