

Children's views of being nursed at home

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What do children think about being nursed at home?

Each year some children fall ill and have to go to hospital.

Some times when these children go home they still need some help and they have a nurse come to see them at home to help them to get better.

We wanted to find out about how it felt to have a nurse come and help children at home, so we talked to some children who have a nurse visit them at home.

We talked, played games, drew pictures with the children, we gave them cameras to take home, a special book and even a tape recorder. We asked the children to record what happened

- Before the nurse came
- When the nurse visited
- After the nurse went away

We then talked to the children about their pictures and writing or sound recordings. We also visited the children when the nurse came. The children had a special day at the end where we made a puppet show all about the nurse's visit.

The children came from lots of different families and had different problems that needed a nurse to visit them. Some needed injections, some special dressings and some had a feeding tube.



What did the children say?

The children found it hard to talk about nurses. They spoke, or took photos mostly of their mum and dad or brothers and sisters who helped them.

They also got a lot of help from friends and school teachers.

Some children had a special toy or pet who helped them.

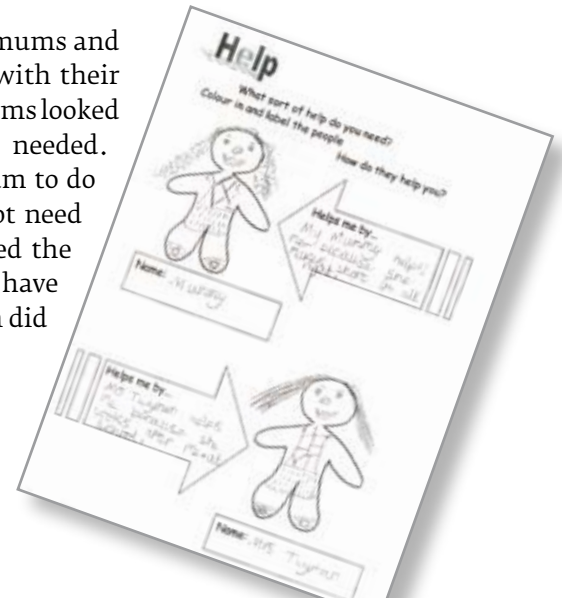
I don't like to think about being ill I prefer to think about playing with my friends and being with my family.

I would rather have my mum or dad do all the things I need to keep me well, than have nurses visit me at home.

A good nurse is fun, but also knows how to do things right to make me better, they respect me as a person and work with my family and friends.

Who else helps children at home when they are ill?

Some of the children lived with their mums and their dads, but all the children lived with their mums. They talked about how their mums looked after them and did everything they needed. Most of the children wanted their mum to do what the nurses did so they would not need to have a nurse. Some children wanted the nurse to come so their mum would not have to do things that they knew their mum did not like (giving injections).





Researcher
Mohammed

Who's the nurse in charge?

Who's the nurse in charge?
My mum.

Researcher

Your mum, very good...
(Pause)... who's the next one in
charge after your mum?

Mohammed

Nobody

Children thought their dad was a fun person who took them out or played with them, they took some funny pictures of their dads.

Other people in the family were also important in helping the children but not in doing what the nurse does. Brothers and sisters helped by playing and giving cuddles and grand parents helped by bringing sweets and treats when the nurse had been.

Teachers

Some of the children talked about how their teacher explained their problems to their class and told the class how they could be helpful to the child.

She told the class that I had Arthritis and to be careful and that... They've always helped me, the class has... They helped me up and down on the floor and stuff. Kelly

Toys and Pets and things

Some children talked about how having their pets close by helped them during the nurse's visit

What did children tell us about the nurse's visit?

When children told us about the nurse's visit they said

- Before the nurse came they would be playing with their friends, brothers or sisters. Sometimes the nurse came before school and the children would be having their breakfast or getting ready for school.
- When the nurse visited the nurse would get out her things and do what they needed to do and then write in their book. Most times the nurse gave them something like a sticker or a certificate, and then she went.
- After the nurse went away they would have their tea and play before bed or if the nurse came in the morning they went to school.

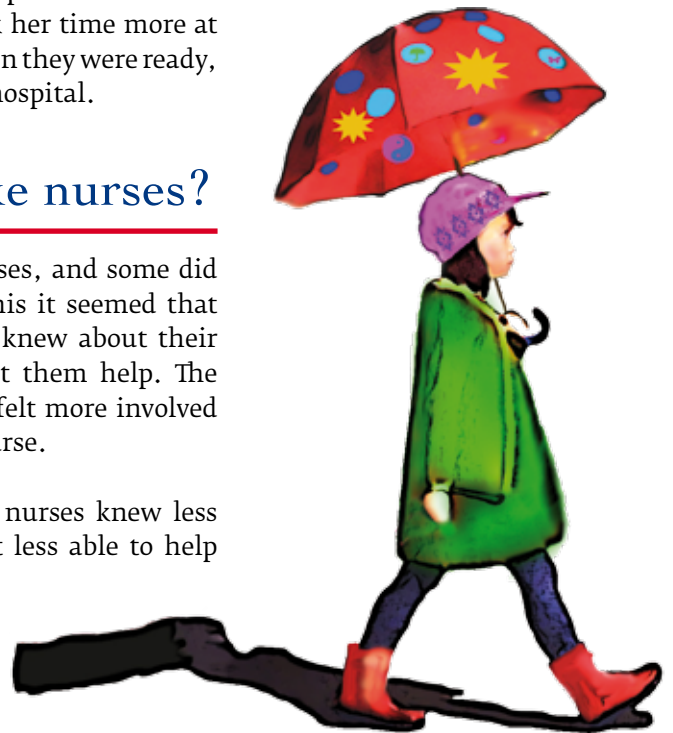
All the children wanted to see the nurse at home rather than in hospital. Often the children felt the nurse took her time more at home, letting them say when they were ready, not rushing as much as in hospital.

Do children like nurses?

Some children did like nurses, and some did not. When we looked at this it seemed that children who liked nurses knew about their illness and their nurses let them help. The children who liked nurses felt more involved in doing things with the nurse.

Children who did not like nurses knew less about their illness and felt less able to help the nurse.

This is me having
my injection



How much do you like nurses?

Not at all

Children who did not like nurses

Knew less about illness

Helped the nurse less

Lots

Children who liked nurses

Knew more about illness

Helped the nurse more

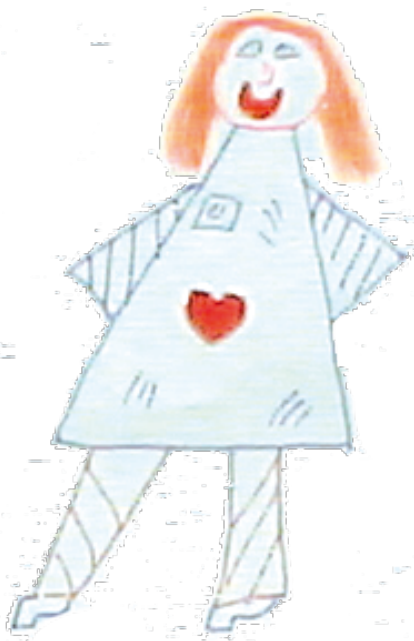
Boys and Girls

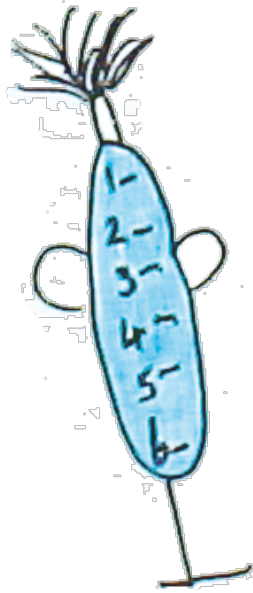
The children also told us that they liked to have a nurse who is the same as them. So boys like men nurses and girls like to have a lady nurse visit them. Some girls felt safe with a lady nurse rather than a man, and boys thought men nurses would be more fun.

What Now?

The children in this study are saying;

- The most important people for children are their families friends and teachers
- The children need to understand what is happening to them and their bodies to understand that nurses are trying to make them feel better.
- Being able to help the nurse helps children to feel safe and to enjoy the nurse's visit.
- Being in control of what is happening when the nurse visits helps children enjoy the nurse's visit.
- The children would like to have nurses like them; lady nurses for girls and men nurses for boys.





We hope that nurses will listen and help children understand their illness more, ask children if they would like to help as much as they can. Children should be in control of when things happen and feel the nurse has plenty of time to talk and sometimes play. Not just come and do what needs to be done and go.

There should be more men nurses so children could choose between having a lady nurse visit and a man nurse.

What else do we need to know?

This study has made us want to find out more about how children and nurse work together when children are ill at home.

- If children had more control would they feel better?
- How can children be helped by their mums, dads and other people who are important to them to feel in control and to learn about their health?
- How can nurses help children to feel in control and help children learn about their health?

Thanks

We would like to give a big thank you to all the children, parents and nurses who helped us do this study, especially, Gizmo, Honey, Joanne, Kelly, Mohammed, Nanny and Rabbit

(These are not the real names of the children but ones they chose to use. The children wanted these names be used when talking about this study.)



Parents and Professional Panel

The study

This study followed seven children, aged 6-12, for over a year using focus groups, diaries, cameras, audio recording, interviews, observations and arts/theatre techniques to explore how children experience being nursed at home.

Focus groups, observation and interviews were conducted with nurses in 2 separate areas to supplement the information from the children.

In this study we talked to children away from their parents or main carers, this allowed us to get an insight into how children experience being nursed.

The study was undertaken by the University of Warwick and funded by the Health Foundation. Dr Clare Blackburn and Dr Anne Adams reviewed the findings. The study gained ethical approval from Solihull Research Ethical Committee.

The findings

This study showed how children find talking about nurses and nursing difficult. Often nurses have to perform procedures which are hurtful.

The nurses in the study talked about how they built up trust with children and parents, which allowed them to come into the child's home and do these hurtful procedures. They also used stickers, certificates or small treats to rebuild this trust after performing hurtful procedures. This was very important to children; all the children loved getting stickers!

Key messages

From what the children say in this study it seems that there are some key messages for parents and for nurses.

For Parents	For Professionals
For children, parents are their main carers.	Children may be reluctant to talk about their health care.
Children want to feel in control of things when the nurse visits.	Allowing children to control what happens during the visit may help them to cope.
It may help children to understand why a nurse is coming if they know about their illness.	Some children do not like nurses. This may be because they need more information about their illness to understand why a nurse is visiting.
Privacy is really important even at home.	Children would like a choice of male or female nurse.

As adults we often judge children by age. In this study children as young as 6 were able to tell us about their illness and about what it was like to be nursed at home. Rather than thinking about age we should be asking children what they understand about their illness and talking to them about how they could take an active part in their care.

Further information

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