



What? Why? Children in Hospital Report on the Parent Survey 'Preparing for Hospital'

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Background

The What? Why? Children in Hospital (WWCIH) charity was founded in January 2015 to help families prepare for hospital. The WWCIH charity aims to make video clips to show children and parents what will happen in hospital to reduce anxiety in children. The work of the charity emphasises the importance of play. We developed a survey to find out how parents have been preparing their child for hospital and to ask if the use of video clips to prepare for hospital would be helpful for families. The survey was made available across Scotland: electronically on the WWCIH website, shared on Facebook and electronic and paper copies were sent to parents of children in mainstream schools and special schools.

Age and Learning Disabilities

We received 100 responses between 11 March 2015 and 11 May 2015. The survey responses represented parents of children of different age groups as shown in Figure 1. There is a higher representation of parents of children aged 6-8 years old. This could be due to the distribution of the survey and/or the emphasis on play in the work of the charity.

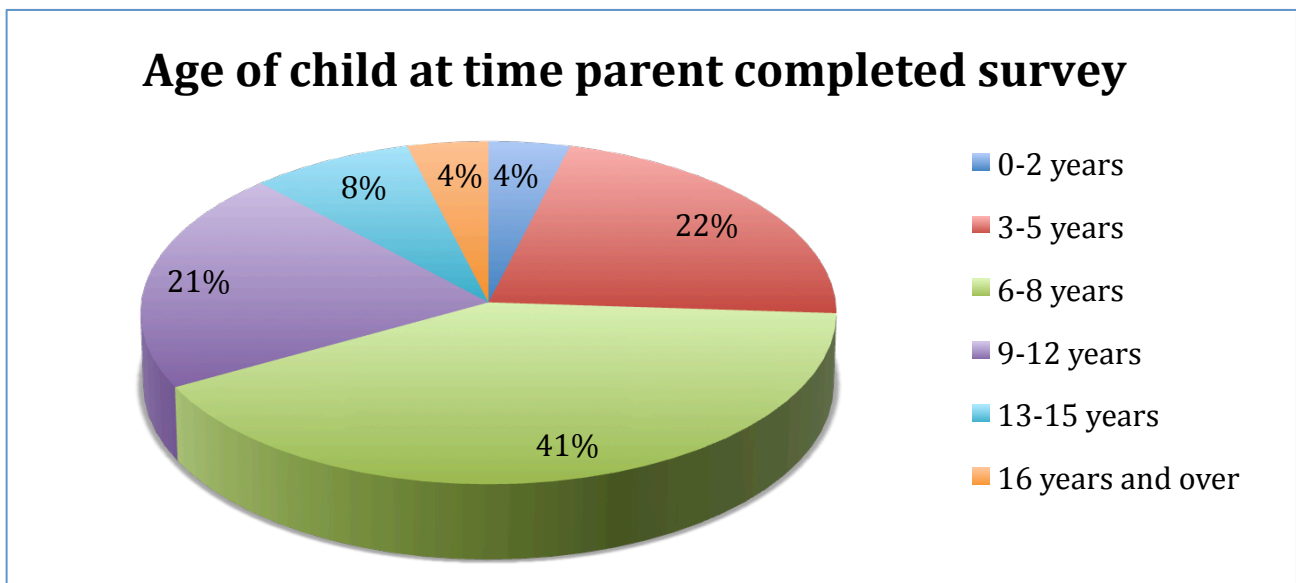


Figure 1. The age group of the child at the time the parent completed the survey.

Out of the 100 responses 75 responses were relating to children without learning disabilities, 22 responses for children with learning disabilities and 3 parents preferred not to say if their child had learning disabilities.

Attending Hospital

Out of the total 100 surveys there were 13 replies from parents of a child who had never been to hospital. 87 parents discussed their child's accident and emergency (A&E), outpatients and/or hospital ward attendance as shown in Figure 2.

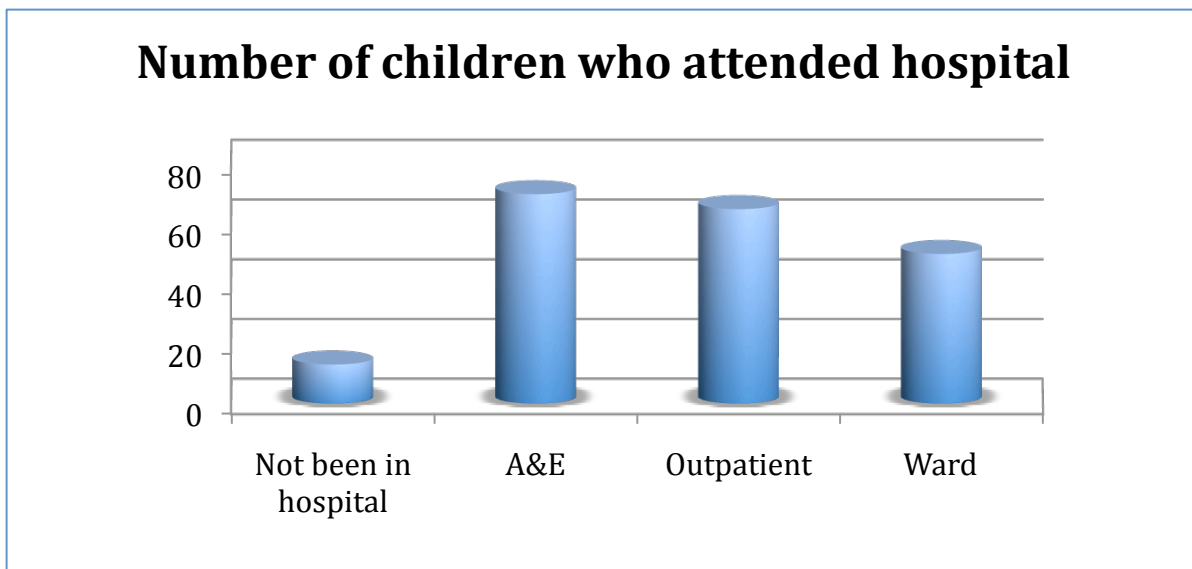


Figure 2. The survey showed the number of children who had been to A&E, outpatient department and/or stayed in a hospital ward.

Preparing for Hospital

Parents of children who had attended hospital provided feedback on how they had prepared their child for hospital. The responses in Figure 3 show that 22% said they had not discussed the visit to hospital, of which 15% said this was because their child was too young at the time of the appointment. 2% said they had not discussed it because of their child's limited communication ability.

A number of parents had not told their child about going to hospital as they had the following concern:

'I do think you have to be careful how much information you give children before visit as sometimes too much info can be as scary as too little.'

WWCIH is very aware of the importance of providing the right amount of information at the right time and that the information should be tailored to the age and ability of the child. Therefore every project planned by the charity will be developed in collaboration with the hospital psychologists.

59% of parents who completed our survey had talked to their child about going to hospital. 8% of children had a pre-admission visit and 8% had a visit to the hospital play specialist. These results show 92% of children who had been to hospital had not had access to a hospital play specialist.

9% of parents had played pretend hospital with toys to prepare their child. One of the parents provided the following feedback highlighting the importance of play:
'My child was too young to talk about it, but the nursery did an amazing mini hospital set up.'

Did you prepare your child for hospital?

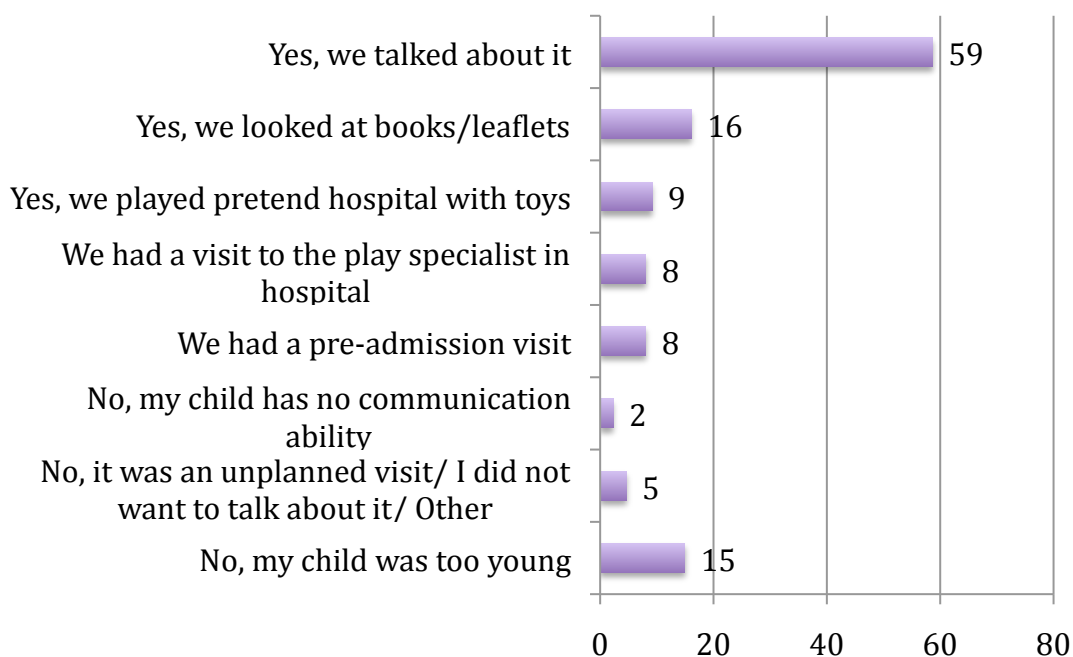


Figure 3. Most parents prepared their child for hospital by talking about it, and a small number of children had a pre-admission visit or a visit to the play specialist in hospital.

Anxious about going to hospital

49% of parents said their child had not been anxious about their hospital visit. Just over half of the parents (51%) said their child had been scared and/or anxious about their hospital visit.

Video clips to prepare for hospital

There was a distinct difference between parents of children with and without learning disabilities when asked about the use of video clips to prepare for hospital. Figure 4 shows an overview of all the responses.

91% of parents of a child without a learning disability thought it would be helpful to have video clips to help them prepare their child and/or help them to be less anxious about going to hospital.

59% of the parents with a child with learning disabilities (LD) said it would be helpful for them. The main reason many parents said they thought it would not be helpful for them was because of their child's communication impairments and/or learning disability. A number of parents replied they thought it would be helpful for others but that a specific approach was required for children with learning disabilities.

One of the parents provided the following feedback:

'I do not think that a generic video clip, even on a specific procedure works for children with autism as they need a more tailored approach currently provided with additional support needs liaison nurses'

The WWCIH charity will ensure that when video clips for children with learning disabilities are developed these are done in close collaboration with learning disability nurses and paediatricians specialised in complex needs and hospital psychologists.

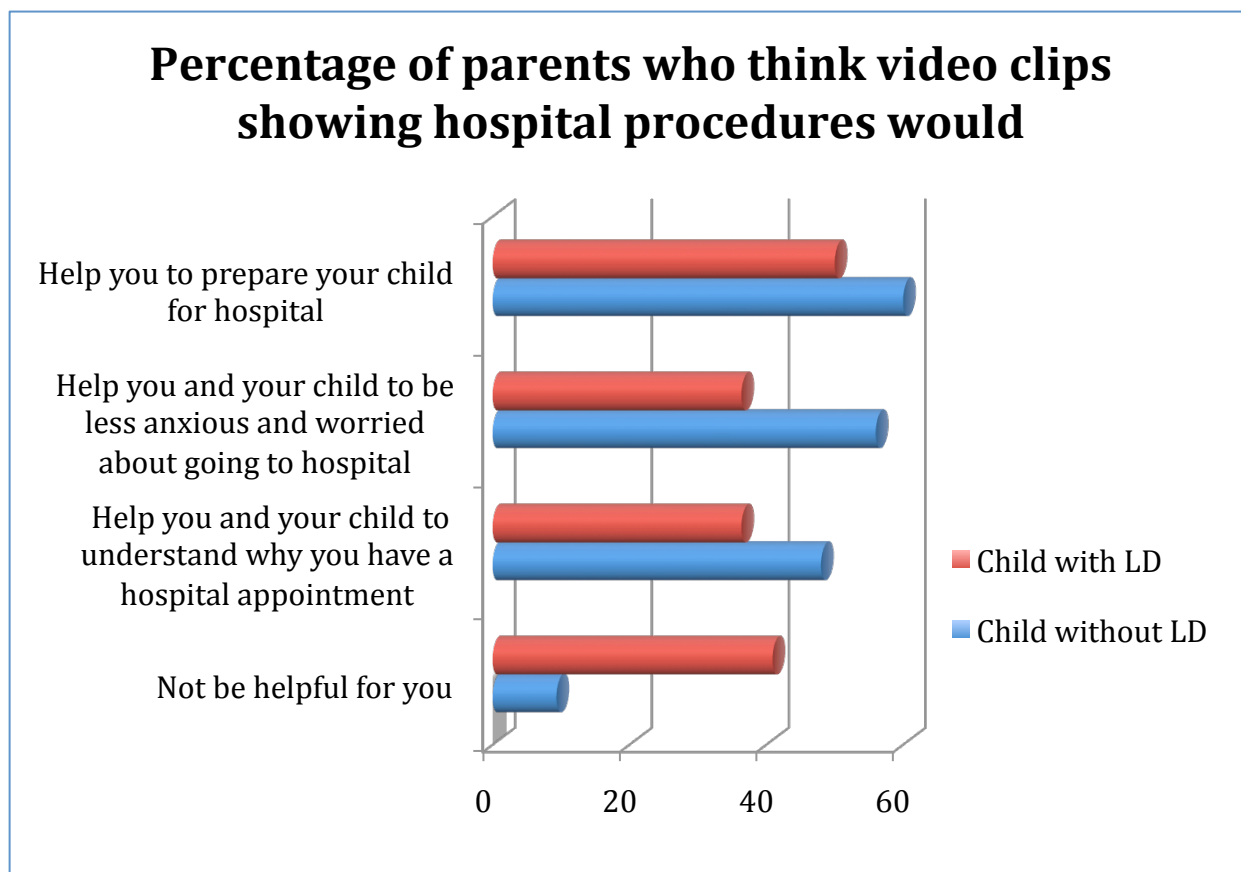


Figure 4. Most parents think video clips would help them to prepare their child with or without learning disabilities (LD) for hospital.

When parents were asked if they had ever missed an appointment or decided not to go because they were not sure why their child was asked to attend 2 parents replied 'yes', 3 parents did not answer the question and 82 parents said 'no'.

48% of parents of a child without a learning disability and 36% of parents of a child with a learning disability said they thought video clips would help them understand why they had a hospital appointment.

Hospital procedures

We asked parents to prioritise which procedures they would find helpful to see in a video clip. We provided a tick box list of 7 procedures and an open text box for other suggestions. Many parents ticked all the boxes or replied 'all' in the 'other' text box.

69 parents selected a video clip on General Anaesthetics as a priority for filming. The results are shown in Figure 5.

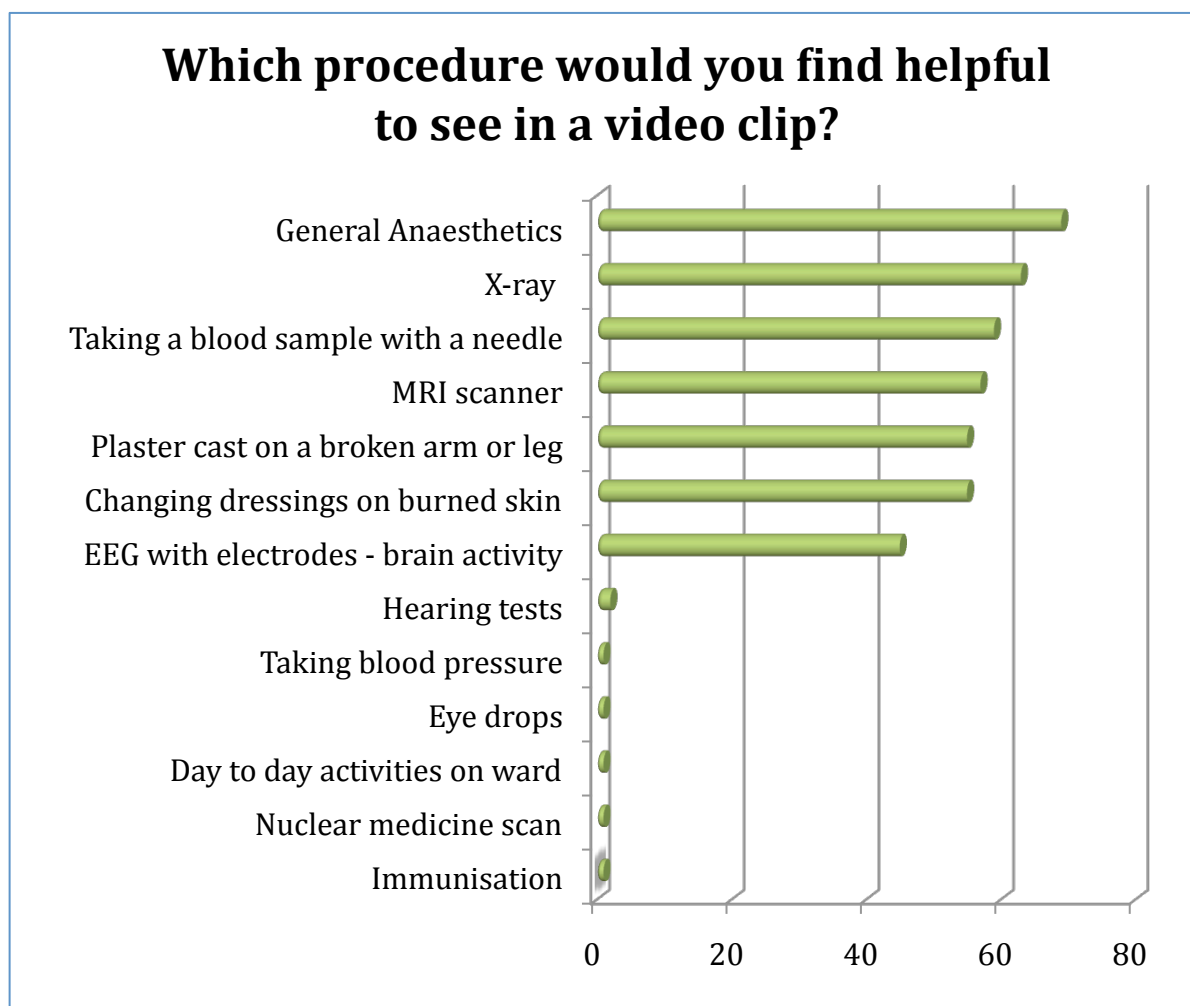


Figure 5. This graph shows the number of parents selecting the above procedures as their priority. 'General Anaesthetics' was selected as a priority by the largest number of parents.

Feedback on Project

Other feedback in the survey included:

'This charity is an excellent idea. I'm sure the video's will be very helpful for children and families of children who have to go into hospital'

'Very positive step forward for patients and their parents'

'Really think this is a great idea and would have appreciated such a resource even more when my child was younger.'

'Great initiative. Experienced first hand the difference between when a child has been prepared/ not been prepared what is going to happen to them in hospital.'