MAGICAL DISTRACTIONS

The use of ‘Magical’ distraction techniques as an alternative to conventional methods of dealing with the stresses of hospitalization will be discussed. Simple tricks that require little or no slight of hand, can often win the trust and confidence of most children, frequently turning tears into smiles. When a child has to make another visit to the hospital they often ask their parent “…do you think I will get to see some more magic” or “…I want the magic man” and not worry so much about the possibility of pain. Frequently, for years afterwards, they recall the magic tricks… not the pain.

Distraction as a method of ‘pain management’ has taken many forms, watching cartoons, listening to stories, clowns in the operating room, music, TV… the list is endless. Kleiber and Harper, in a large meta-analysis concluded that: “Using distraction with children during medical procedures will reduce the amount of observed distress behavior for most children. The magnitude of the benefit will vary from child to child. Distraction is a low-cost intervention that has no risk to the patient and has a measurable benefit.”

A brief video demonstrating a few magic tricks and how I use them in the peri-operative setting will be shown.

References


Presented at SPA Annual Meeting, 2006