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Emotions in postoperative children

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BACKGROUND: Each year many children undergo different surgical procedures and interventions. This experience of hospitalisation can trigger emotional conditions, which in turn can influence post-hospital behaviour. The aim of this study was to analyse a newly developed short questionnaire (12 items) to assess postoperative emotions.

METHODS: At the University clinic of Graz 634 postoperative children (age: 11.1 ± 4.0 years; girls, 35.1%) were asked to answer a questionnaire regarding their emotions. All analyses were performed in R.

RESULTS: Using a 2PL model five factors could be extracted (explained variance: 62.21%) representing (1) well-being, (2) weakness, (3) anxiousness, (4) boredom and (5) sadness. (RMSEA = .04, 90% CI: 0.03 − 0.06); CFI = .98, 95% CI: 0.97 − 0.98; TLI = .96, 95% CI: 0.96 − 0.97). There were no statistically significant differences in factor scores between girls and boys. Factor scores did not change with age, except anxiousness which showed a weak correlation with age ($r = .083$, $p < .05$).

DISCUSSION: Our results suggest that in postoperative children their emotional state can be assessed with a short questionnaire using only 12 items.

Primary authors: STIJIC, Marko (Medical University of Graz, Institute for Medical Informatics, Statistics and Documentation);   AVIAN, Alexander (Medical University of Graz, Institute for Medical Informatics, Statistics and Documentation)

Presenters: STIJIC, Marko (Medical University of Graz, Institute for Medical Informatics, Statistics and Documentation);   AVIAN, Alexander (Medical University of Graz, Institute for Medical Informatics, Statistics and Documentation)

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