

LETTER TO EDITOR

Quality of nursing care in pediatric emergencies: parents' perspective

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To the Editor,

In recent years, the use of emergency services has increased. This demands better quality standards of care. To achieve this, it is necessary to have highly qualified health personnel, essential biomedical equipment, disposable medical supplies, and the drugs required to meet the demand for care. Despite multiple efforts, a growing dissatisfaction on the part of users with the quality of care received has been documented (1,2). Quality of care encompasses all strategies focused on excellence and user satisfaction, with nursing care being fundamental to achieving such standards. However, the overload of tasks of the healthcare staff highlights the limitations in meeting patients' needs. This dissatisfaction lies in long waiting times, the quality of the treatment received, and the perception of deficient care. To evaluate the quality of care, a structural, process, and outcome approach is necessary (3-7). Pediatric nursing is a priority for the care of children and adolescents, facilitating the fulfillment of their needs not only in the individual but also in the community and family context (8). Therefore, this letter aims to highlight the need to optimize the quality of pediatric nursing services, allowing health professionals to have a broad understanding of current problems. This will enable the generation of initiatives oriented towards continuous improvement, promoting the satisfaction of users and their families.

The Hospital Regional Docente de Trujillo provides health care to patients from the entire region of La Libertad and has a pediatrics and pediatric emergency service. Currently, like many health centers in Peru, it faces a chronic shortage of qualified personnel, which directly impacts the capacity to meet the growing demand for services. In 2018, with the consent of the health center and participants, a short survey on satisfaction related to the pediatric nursing service was conducted. The survey addressed three dimensions: structure, processes, and outcomes. A total of 50 participants were surveyed, of which 94 % (n=47) rated it as poor, and the remaining 6 % (n=3) rated it as fair. Unfortunately, no participants rated the nursing service as good. The results for each dimension were similar, with values exceeding 50 % for poor perception of the service, both for structure, processes, and outcomes (Table 1).

Regarding the structure, 80 % (n=40) of parents perceived deficiencies, possibly linked to the insufficiency of basic supplies such as bed linen and medical equipment, as well as the absence of adequate conditions in terms of comfort in the service, such as the lack of seats, elements that are beyond the direct control of the nursing staff. Regarding processes, 56 % (n=28) of the parents rated this aspect unsatisfactory. They indicated that nurses' explanations of procedures, treatments, and care were insufficient, which could be attributed to staffing shortages and the consequent time constraints for care, exacerbated by the fast-paced nature of the emergency setting. Finally, regarding outcomes, 84 % (n=42) of participants expressed a negative rating, expressing dissatisfaction with the care received and a reluctance to recommend the service. These results underscore the urgency of implementing substantial improvements to raise the perceived quality of care provided.

These preliminary results highlight the need to implement continuous improvement plans in the pediatric nursing service that include action with parents promoting education and good treatment. This could change the negative perception of the quality of nursing care in pediatric patients. To understand the situation in other health centers with pediatric care, we suggest developing more in-depth research with greater epidemiological robustness, addressing more patients, and using validated surveys. Finally, it is indicated that all the actions that can be carried out, together with an adequate supply of resources and constant motivation of the nursing staff, are crucial to improving the quality of care and user satisfaction.


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Table 1. Quality of nursing care and dimensions from the perspective of parents of children in the Hospital Regional Docente de Trujillo pediatric emergency department in 2018 (n=50)

Quality of nursing care	n (%)	DIMENSIONS		
		Structure n (%)	Processes n (%)	Outcome n (%)
Malo	47 (94)	40 (80)	28 (56)	42 (84)
Regular	3 (6)	10 (20)	22 (44)	8 (16)
Bueno	0	0	0	0

Source: Self-elaborated

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Authors’ contribution

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Conflicts of interest

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