
Abstract:

AIM: To explore the nature, process and consequences of giving information to children aged three to 11 years before and during venepuncture.

METHOD: This was a non-participant, observational, qualitative study of 11 children and four healthcare professionals before and during venepuncture. The healthcare professionals were: a sister, a healthcare assistant, a junior doctor and a staff nurse.

FINDINGS: There was little assessment of children’s levels of knowledge of venepuncture and they received no information before the procedure. During the procedure, the children under six years of age only received information about the local anaesthetic cream during the application of the cream, not the venepuncture; the older children received information about the application of the cream and the venepuncture during both procedures. Practitioners used different language with the younger children when applying the local anaesthetic cream. Although the younger children did not appear distressed by the application of the cream, they appeared to be distressed by the venepuncture–more so than the older children–protesting and crying during the procedure.

CONCLUSION: Some of the distress associated with venepuncture can be avoided if children
are given information about the procedure in a way they can understand.