“Almost three quarters of patients spontaneously look away during venepuncture, but their pain ratings are almost twice that of the quarter of patients who look.” Vijayan et al (2014).

Reference:


Reported pain in patients who look away during venepuncture http://ctt.ec/61a9S+ @ivteam #ivteam

Click To Tweet

Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Various external factors can influence patients’ experiences of noxious stimuli, but little is known of how patients’ natural behaviour may be relevant. We ascertained how often patients spontaneously look or look away during venepuncture and associated reports of pain during a previously reported experimental randomized study. The study was conducted in the outpatient department of a UK district general hospital.

METHODS: Patients were randomized to hearing ‘sharp scratch’ or the verbal cue ‘ready?’ immediately before venepuncture. Whether patients looked or looked away during needle
insertion was recorded. Patients were asked to rate their pain using a verbal numerical rating score (VNRS) and verbal response scale (VRS).

RESULTS: One hundred ninety-two patients were included; mean age 51.7 years, 55% male. During needle insertion, 73% spontaneously looked away, whereas 27% looked. There was no significant difference in the proportion of these patients assigned to the ‘sharp scratch’ or ‘ready?’ groups, nor was there any difference in mean age or gender. For the group that looked, mean VNRS was 0.48 and VRS was 1.27, significantly less than the group that looked away (mean VNRS 0.94, p = 0.014; VRS 1.61, p = 0.002). As previously reported, pain ratings between ‘sharp scratch’ and ‘ready?’ groups were not significantly different.

CONCLUSIONS: Almost three quarters of patients spontaneously look away during venepuncture, but their pain ratings are almost twice that of the quarter of patients who look. It is unclear why this may be, but previous experimental studies indicate that observing the body when a noxious stimulus is applied can have an analgesic effect.

Other intravenous and vascular access resources that may be of interest (External links – IVTEAM has no responsibility for content).