

Title of Paper: Messy play with children on haemodialysis.

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Abstract: Please type in Times New Roman 11 point font

Background:

Messy play can be defined as child- led exploration of different sensory media (textures, smells and tastes). Messy play is a valuable therapeutic tool in the multidisciplinary approach to managing children with sensory problems. It can be used for a diverse range of problems including problems with sensory integration including autism spectrum disorder and feeding disorders that are associated with oral aversion. It provides children with positive sensory experiences that can facilitate sensory development and promote oral feeding.

Our experience:

We have extensive experience caring for children undergoing haemodialysis on our tertiary nephrology unit. Many of our patients develop sensory aversion as a consequence of long periods spent in a hospital environment that is sterile and lacking in tactile sensory variety and undergoing multiple sterile procedures. We have observed the benefits of messy play on sensory development in these children in particular younger children.

Guideline development:

Despite the recognized benefits of messy play there is a lack of guidance on how to provide messy play in a hospital setting. We developed a practice guideline for the use of messy play with children on haemodialysis by searching for evidence and agreeing on consensus practice when evidence was lacking. We wished to share our guidance throughout the Children's Hospital for use with other patient groups that may benefit from messy play and to share our practice more widely.

Our guideline gives detailed practical advice for healthcare professionals about using messy play effectively with hospitalized children. It describes three types of media (hard, soft, and wet) that may be used in a staged approach. There is information on the developmental benefits of messy play and advice on how to facilitate a positive learning environment. We plan to review and audit the use of our guideline in the future.

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