
FEATURES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR NURSES IN CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS UNDER MARTIAL LAW

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<https://doi.org/10.35339/ic.2025.12.1.toy>

ABSTRACT

Background. Martial law presents significant challenges for nurses working with children. Children's hospitals are becoming institutions that provide not only medical care but also comprehensive medical and social support for both children and their families.

Aim. To analyse the provision of psychological support in the professional activities of nurses in the paediatric unit.

Materials and Methods. A survey on the psychological aspects of nurses' work was conducted in April 2024 among the parents of 20 children from the Orthopedics and Traumatology Department of the Municipal Non-Profit Enterprise "Chernihiv Regional Children's Hospital" of Chernihiv Regional Council. An anonymous questionnaire of our own design was used to evaluate the work of a nurse. Respondents signed an informed consent to participate in the study.

Results. Positive communication was noted by 90% of respondents, indicating the nurses' professionalism, empathy, and willingness to create favorable conditions for children's treatment. In addition, the respondents reported a high level of nurses' adaptation to the extreme conditions of martial law, as well as their ability to ensure effective interaction with patients and their families. Data analysis regarding nurses' ability to create a friendly atmosphere for children during hospital interactions showed consistently positive feedback from parents. The individual needs of children were rated positively in 85% of responses. However, 5% of respondents answered negatively, indicating that some parents believed their child's needs and interests were not adequately considered by the nurses.

Conclusions. The need to work under crisis conditions may affect the effectiveness of nurses' performance. The development of specialized psychological support programs can assist nurses in adapting to the changing realities of wartime, foster their emotional resilience, contribute to the creation of an emotionally safe environment for patients, and support parents during the challenging period of their children's treatment.

Keywords: *nursing, adaptation, patient care.*

Introduction

Martial law presents significant challenges to the healthcare system, particularly for health professionals working with children [1; 2]. Pediatric hospitals serve not only as centers for medical care but also as institutions providing comprehensive support to children and their families, who often experience severe stress due to military operations. In such conditions, nurses play a crucial role

not only as medical professionals but also as psychological supporters, educators, and social communicators [3; 4].

The war significantly alters the format and nature of nurses' work, as they are required to function not only as mid-level professionals but also to assume additional responsibilities. They become not merely executors of medical procedures but also intermediaries between children, their families, and other healthcare providers [5; 6]. In critical hospital settings, psychological support for children is crucial, as children represent the most vulnerable population during times of war. They often fail to comprehend the full extent of the events occurring around them, which can lead to heightened fear, anxiety, and depression. These emotional responses, in turn, may affect their

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physical condition and the overall effectiveness of treatment [7].

Nurses working in pediatric hospitals must possess not only professional medical skills but also knowledge of crisis psychology, and effective communication with traumatized children and their families [8–10]. Creating a supportive psychological environment is crucial, as it helps reduce stress and accelerates the rehabilitation process in children [11]. Research indicates that high-quality psychological and pedagogical support during treatment significantly reduces the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder in children [12; 13].

Aim. To analyse the provision of psychological support in the professional activities of nurses in the paediatric unit.

Materials & Methods

In April 2024, eight children with traumatic injuries (40%), four with congenital anomalies and malformations (20%), two with osteochondropathy (10%), four with scoliosis (20%), and two with hip dysplasia (10%) were treated in the Orthopedics and Traumatology Department of the Municipal Non-Profit Enterprise "Chernihiv Regional Children's Hospital" under the Chernihiv Regional Council. The parents of children with these conditions participated in our anonymous survey titled "Psychological Aspects in the Work of a Children's Hospital Nurse under Martial Law". The respondents signed an informed consent to participate in the scientific study.

Results and Discussion

In response to the question, "Are you satisfied with communication with nurses at the children's regional hospital under martial law?" 90% of respondents answered positively. This suggests a high level of professionalism among the nursing staff, their ability to adapt to the extreme conditions of martial law, and their capacity to maintain effective interaction with patients and their families. One respondent (5%) gave a negative response, indicating dissatisfaction with communication. Possible reasons for this may include personal conflict, lack of attention, or insufficiently clear explanations, particularly in the stressful context of wartime.

In response to the question, "How would you rate the level of care and support your children received from nurses during their hospital stay?" 19 out of 20 parents surveyed (95%) stated that the level of care and support provided was high. This reflects the professionalism of the nurses, their empathy, and their commitment to creating favorable conditions for children's treatment. One

respondent (5%) rated the level of care as average, which may suggest occasional shortcomings in the work of the medical staff, such as a lack of individualized approach, insufficient attention, or limited resources in certain situations.

In response to the question, "Do you think that nurses are able to communicate effectively with children and their parents during hospital visits in wartime?" 18 out of 20 parents surveyed (90%) believed that nurses were able to do so. This suggests a high level of communication skills and the ability of medical staff to establish trusting relationships even under the stressful conditions of martial law. At the same time, two respondents (10%) indicated that they found it difficult to answer. This may reflect limited interaction with nurses, an ambiguous experience, or the absence of a clearly positive or negative impression.

In response to the question, "Have you been provided with information on how to help your child psychologically adapt to martial law?" 18 out of 20 parents (90%) stated that they had received all the necessary information. This reflects the high level of nurses' competence in providing psychological support to children and parents, as well as their professional approach to facilitating children's adaptation under challenging conditions. Two respondents (10%) indicated that the information was provided only partially. This may suggest a lack of detail in the recommendations, limited time for comprehensive communication, or unclear explanations in some cases.

In response to the question, "Were you provided with recommendations on stress management and psychological support for you and your child during your hospital stay?", 18 out of 19 parents surveyed (95%) reported that they had received comprehensive recommendations. This reflects the professional approach of nurses in providing psychological support to families under challenging hospital conditions. One respondent (5%) indicated that the information was provided only partially, which may suggest insufficient detail in the recommendations, limited time for communication, or difficulties in understanding the guidance.

In response to the question, "Do you think that nurses interact appropriately with children, creating a friendly atmosphere?" all 20 parents surveyed (100%) gave a positive answer. The data analysis revealed unanimous parental approval of nurses' ability to foster a friendly and supportive environment for children during hospital interactions. This reflects the exceptional professional-

lism, empathy, and high standard of communication demonstrated by the nursing staff.

In response to the question, "Do nurses take into account the individual needs and interests of children during treatment?" the majority of parents (85%) stated that the medical staff, particularly nurses, paid attention to the individual needs of children when providing care. However, 5% of respondents answered negatively, indicating that some parents did not believe their child's individual needs and interests were adequately considered. Additionally, 10% reported that these needs were only partially taken into account, suggesting certain shortcomings or challenges in addressing individualized care during treatment.

In response to the question, "How do you assess the level of psychological support you and your child received from nurses during inpatient treatment?", 17 out of 20 respondents (85%) stated that nurses fully considered their children's individual needs and interests. This reflects the high level of staff competence in applying an individualized approach, which likely has a positive impact on the child's emotional state and treatment outcomes. Two parents (10%) reported that individual needs were only partially considered, which may suggest instances where nurses lacked the time or resources to fully address specific requests or did not pay sufficient attention to minor details. One respondent (5%) indicated that individual needs were not taken into account. Although isolated, such responses are noteworthy, as they may point to systemic issues such as insufficient staff training in pediatric care or organizational shortcomings in the treatment process.

In response to the question, "How do you assess the psychological approach of nurses towards your child during treatment?" 85% of surveyed parents expressed satisfaction with the way nurses interacted with their children and provided psychological support. This suggests that most parents are content with the communication, emotional support, and educational efforts offered by the medical staff. It may be assumed that nurses effectively tailor their approach to the child's age and psychological needs, thereby helping children better understand the treatment process and cope with stress.

Fifteen percent of surveyed parents assessed the psychological approach as average. This may suggest that, for some families, certain aspects of care could be improved or given greater attention by the medical staff – such as insufficient focus on individual needs, communication challenges, or,

in some cases, limited psychological training. According to the survey, 90% of parents are satisfied with communication with nurses, indicating a high level of interaction and trust. Ninety-five percent of respondents rated the level of care for children as high, highlighting the professionalism and attentiveness of the nurses. Eighty percent of parents believe that nurses create a friendly atmosphere for children, which positively impacts the patients' emotional well-being. However, 20% of respondents reported a lack of information regarding children's psychological adaptation in the hospital, suggesting the need for additional training for nurses in psychological support methods and working with children under stressful conditions.

In wartime, nurses play an important psychological and pedagogical role that extends beyond medical care to include education and support. They instruct parents on how to properly care for their children during treatment, providing information on preventing complications and managing wound care. They also explain the specifics of the child's condition and treatment, helping to alleviate fear and anxiety. Nurses organize educational sessions for children in long-term hospital care to support their development and minimize the effects of isolation. Additionally, they assist children in developing self-care skills, which are essential for their rehabilitation and adaptation to everyday life following discharge.

These aspects highlight the important role of nurses in both medical and pedagogical support for children, a role that becomes even more significant in the context of martial law.

Based on the results of studying the role of the nurse in care and psychological support, we formulated recommendations for treatment and care organizers.

1. The primary role of nurses in children's hospitals during martial law is not only to provide medical treatment to children but also to offer psychological support to both the children and their families. This includes creating an emotionally safe environment for patients, as well as assisting parents during the challenging period of their children's treatment.

2. The main challenges faced by nurses include high levels of stress and psychological burnout, a lack of resources, and the need to work in crisis conditions, such as the constant threat of insecurity, shelling, evacuation, and interruptions in the supply of energy and medicine. These factors significantly affect the effectiveness of healthcare professionals.

3. It is essential to enhance the training system for nurses in the psychological aspects of their work, particularly in methods of mental support, the development of emotional resilience, and adaptation to changing conditions. This will improve their effectiveness and ensure the delivery of high-quality medical care in challenging wartime conditions.

Conclusions

Under martial law, nurses in pediatric hospitals play a multifaceted role, not only delivering medical care but also providing essential psychological and educational support to children and their families. Survey results revealed that [90–100] % of parents appreciated nurses' communication, empathy, and ability to create a supportive environment, although up to 20% noted gaps in psychological information or individualized care. This highlights both the strengths and the areas needing improvement in nurse training, especially

concerning crisis communication and trauma-informed care. The findings confirm that nurses are key figures in maintaining the emotional stability of pediatric patients, which directly influences treatment outcomes.

DECLARATIONS:

Disclosure Statement

The authors have no potential conflicts of interest to disclosure, including specific financial interests, relationships, and/or affiliations relevant to the subject matter or materials included.

Statement of Ethics

The authors have no ethical conflicts to disclosure.

Data Transparency

The data can be requested from the authors.

Funding Sources

There are no external sources of funding.

Consent for publication

All authors give their consent to publication.

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Received: 27 Feb 2025

Accepted: 12 Mar 2025

Published: 31 Mar 2025

Cite in Vancouver style as: Tovstohon KV, Yeryomenko GV. Features of psychological support for nurses in children's hospitals under martial law. Inter Collegas. 2025;12(1):70-4.
<https://doi.org/10.35339/ic.2025.12.1.toy>

Archived: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15656689>

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