



# Influence of Positive Distractions on Children's in Two Clinic Waiting Areas

## AUTHOR(S)

Debajyoti Pati and Upali Nanda. *Health Environments Research & Design Journal*. (Accepted for publication).

## ABSTRACT:

**Objective:** To examine the influence of positive distraction on the behavior and activities of children in two clinic waiting areas.

**Background:** People spend a considerable proportion of time waiting in hospitals. Studies show that the quality of the waiting environment influences perception of quality of care and caregivers. Studies also show that perception of waiting time is a larger indicator of patient satisfaction than actual waiting time, and that the waiting environment contributes to the perception of wait time. In fact the attractiveness of the physical environment in waiting areas have been shown to be significantly associated with higher perceived quality of care, reduced anxiety, and higher reported positive interaction with staff.

Can positive distractions in the waiting areas improve the waiting experience, as indicated by the behavior and activities of the children's waiting for treatment?

Positive distractions in the form of artwork, virtual reality, music, and other forms have shown positive impact on patients undergoing treatment. Will that hold true for the waiting experience?

**Method:** Five distraction conditions were randomly introduced in the waiting area of the dental and cardiac clinics at a major pediatric tertiary care center through a single plasma screen intervention. Attention, behavior, and activities of children while waiting were recorded. Data on 158 pediatric patients were collected over 12 days during December 2008 and January 2009.

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Results: Data analyses show that the introduction of distraction conditions was associated with higher calm behavior and less fine and gross movement, suggesting significant calming effects of the distraction conditions. Data also suggest that positive distraction conditions are significant attention grabbers. Data suggests that positive distractions could be an important contributing source to improving the waiting experience for children in hospitals by improving the environmental attractiveness.

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