

MEDICAL INNOVATIONS

A New Way To Treat Children With Chronic Pain

(NAPSA)—There's good news for children who experience chronic pain. A new approach to pain care will finally offer relief for young patients and their families.

It's estimated that 25 to 46 percent of children and teens experience chronic pain: serious pain on a daily basis over the course of three months or more. Most children and teens who seek help see, on average, four to five medical specialists—or even more—plus have multiple, expensive tests without answers for why they hurt, before they find the care they need. All of this adds up to lost school days and lost workdays for their parents, which can create significant financial burdens on families.

A New Approach

To help ease pain for children, the Pain Medicine Care Complex at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., has developed an innovative, multidisciplinary approach to addressing pain that is helping patients achieve a higher quality of life.

The pain medicine team has incorporated new interactive video games that distract patients from their pain, while also collecting important data about their movements and response to treatment. According to Sarah Rebstock, M.D., Ph.D., Clinical Director of the Pain Medicine Program and a Principal Investigator of the Sheikh Zayed Institute, these “medically meaningful” video games provide digital medical data collection for the first time ever, which enables better short-term pain management and long-term research. The games are based on proven physical therapy activities and help patients build their range of motion. Additionally, when it comes to treating pain, the Pain Medicine Care Complex tailors treatments based on the unique needs of each patient. These treatments can include traditional pain medicines when appropriate or complementary therapies including psychological support, acupuncture, massage and biofeedback.

Medically meaningful video games

The video games were developed jointly between Interface Media Group and the Pain Medicine Initiative of the Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation at Children's National.



A new multidisciplinary approach to pediatric pain management is said to help patients achieve a higher quality of life.

The games take patients through a series of exercises and activities based on current physical therapy techniques. Some of the games create the feeling of being in a futuristic Olympic sports event. Others, designed for very young children, create the feeling of painting large pictures. The interactive aspect of the games includes proprietary software that gathers patient data to track improved range of motion.

The Pain Medicine Care Complex also includes a high-tech, interactive POD bed designed by interior designer Alberto Frias, which serves as a biofeedback environment for the patient. The POD bed reduces anxiety and tension for patients, a common symptom of children with chronic pain.

Finally, state-of-the-art teleconference and telemedicine technology allows the pain medicine experts at Children's National to help diagnose and treat patients beyond Washington, D.C., and around the world.

Innovation in Research

The Pain Medicine Care Complex is part of the Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation at Children's National in Washington, D.C. The Institute was launched in 2009 with a gift from the government of Abu Dhabi on behalf of the people. This was the largest gift ever given for innovation in pediatric surgery. The Institute conducts research that will help children all over the world, and is specifically dedicated to making surgery more precise, less invasive and pain free.

To learn more, visit www.ChildrensNational.org/InnovationInstitute.