



# “Are You Anxious?” Nurses’ and Nursing Students’ Knowledge of and Readiness to Screen for Pediatric Preoperative Anxiety

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ABSTRACT



**Problem Statement:** Pediatric preoperative anxiety prevalence ranges from 41% to 75%. Each yearly increase in age leads to a 5% reduction in the likelihood of preoperative anxiety, making young children more susceptible. Preoperative anxiety is linked to adverse outcomes, including prolonged induction time of anesthesia, prolonged recovery, increased need for pain medications, and the alarming association between preoperative anxiety with increased morbidity during surgery. Providing education about the importance and utilization of a screening tool can impact children’s surgical experience and post-surgical outcomes by detecting preoperative anxiety and intervening when necessary.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to establish an evidence-based protocol for increasing nurses’ and nursing students’ awareness and understanding of preoperative pediatric anxiety and their role in screening for it.

**Approach:** This project evaluated baseline and post-intervention knowledge and screening readiness of nurses and nursing students in regards to pediatric preoperative anxiety. Each participant completed demographic questions and a pre and post test adapted from Rozenman & Patarino’s knowledge and needs assessment. The intervention included a short educational video about pediatric preoperative anxiety and a PowerPoint presentation about the modified Yale Preoperative Anxiety Scale Short Form (mYPAS-SF) as well as the evidence-based interventions to manage pediatric preoperative anxiety.

**Findings:** The sample included 41 participants: 27 nursing students and 14 nurses. There was a statistically significant difference between the pre and post test after the intervention, demonstrating improvement in knowledge of pediatric preoperative anxiety and its screening ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $t = 2.021$ ). Nurses and nursing students improved in their awareness of the mYPAS-SF tool as a preoperative anxiety screening tool. There was not a statistically significant difference between the pre and post tests after the intervention regarding participant interest in learning more about pediatric preoperative anxiety ( $p = 0.182$ ,  $t = 2.021$ ).

**Conclusions and Implications:** Education about pediatric preoperative anxiety and the mYPAS-SF tool can be an effective way to increase knowledge about the importance of pediatric preoperative anxiety screening, detection, and potential interventions.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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