



Hospital Clowning as Play Stimulus in Healthcare



In MDPI Open Access Pediatrics Journal, Children

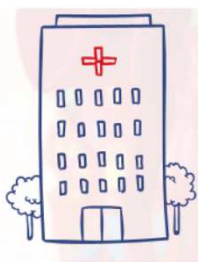
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Some context



708,000
Patients
14,400
Clown Visits



790
Medical and
Social
Institutions



346
Professionally
Trained
Clowns



10
Countries

Statistics from 2016

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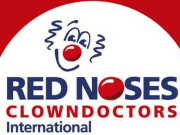


Training and methodology

Use of performing arts to engage ill and hospitalised children in active play and to join in and participate in artistic activities (Article 31, CRC)

- Use an array of methods and artistic techniques:
 - Improvisation, music, circus arts, pantomime, magic, story-telling, etc.
- The type of play and method of intervention is adjusted to the condition of the child and their medical context
- Children are invited to join in the play, only if they wish to do so
- Visits generally last between 3 to 5 hours and are carried out by 2 artists, preferably a male and a female clown
- Clowns need to be acquainted with the medical situation of each individual child in the ward

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Training and methodology

Entry requirements

- Minimum age of 23 years
- Professional artist with a background preferably in the performing arts
- Clean police record

Stage 1

Applicant has to pass 3-4 auditions, depending on clown performances

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Stage 2

After auditions, 6 month training period starts

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Stage 3


Next training stage for one year



Basic curriculum training
Approx. 400h of training in 4 fields:

- Artistic, medical, psychosocial and communication

Ongoing trainings, supervisions and coaching



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How does it work?

- The clowns move from bedside to bedside in several children's wards
- In the hospital room the child's play possibilities are generally restricted
- The clowndoctor assumes the role of the playmate, as they child is often alone or with the parents
- The clowns use the situation of the *here and now* to initiate and engage in some form of play. Create amusing scenes and play with what they have at hand.
- Stimulate children's senses and capabilities, in line with their medical situation



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Which are the expected results?

The visits provide a space for children to:

- Identify and express their emotions
- Try out their physical capacities in light of certain limitations imposed by their ailment
- Be relieved of his or her passive role in the everyday hospital routine, as their illness and temporarily fade into the background
- Trigger their imagination and creativity
- Change in the mood for children, parents and medical staff

Children's reactions differ greatly depending on the age group



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Different stages of child development require different approaches



- **Toddlers:** play for distraction (bubbles and post-procedure play)
- **Pre-school and school-aged children:** role playing and make-believe situations are a powerful tool to divert the attention and engage children
- **Young persons:** respectful play and recognition of the age. Show interest in their situation



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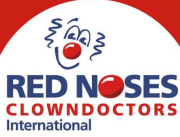
Impact

Humour and play in the hospital

- Ease the fear caused by illness, long-term hospitalisation and/or painful treatments
- Enable a creative and participatory environment for children
- Facilitate children's adaptation to the hospital environment
- De-dramatise the hospital environment
- Improve reactions to medical staff and procedures
- Contribute to reduce stress levels
- Improve children's general well-being



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Conclusion

Ill and hospitalised children often do not understand the processes taking place around them. They do not often understand why the limitations and restrictions

It is in this distressing period that special emphasis needs to be placed on the emotional and psychosocial support given to the little patients and on the need to create enabling environments that allow for children to be children, even in the face of serious or life-threatening illness.

Even if hospital clowning cannot alter the reality that the children have to face, it can lighten their experience

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Thank you!



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