



# Children's and Parent's Perceptions of a Magnetic Resonance Imaging Examination

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**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this study was to describe children's and parents' perceptions after a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) examination. Semistructured interviews with eight children and eight parents were conducted. The interviews were analyzed using a phenomenographical approach. Both children and parents perceived a sense of security when they received preparation/information. The children perceived that it was positive to have their parents present. Children and parents also felt a sense of security from the positive attitude of the health professionals. They perceived anxiety if they felt that the preparation/information they were given was insufficient. The MRI scanner caused anxiety because of its size, design, and sound, and they were anxious about the risk of a failed examination. The children talked much about the difficulty of lying still. The parents perceived that more information about the MRI examination should be offered. By having the knowledge of how children and their parents perceive an MRI examination could help and guide health professionals for better understanding and high-quality care. (J Radiol Nurs 2014;33:30-34.)

**KEYWORDS:** Magnetic resonance imaging; Children; Parents; Nursing; Perceptions.

## INTRODUCTION

Both adults and children need to know what will take place during any health care procedure so that they can prepare themselves. It is easier to carry out an examination or treatment if the situation is understood by the recipient (Edwinston Månsson, 1992). Article 12 of the Convention Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC; UNICEF, 1999) states that children, like adults, are entitled to be consulted about what is suggested for them and may express their views in all areas related to this issue. The child patient has the right to be offered understandable information regarding the different types of treatments and examinations available. A Nordic standard for children and young people in care

(NOBAB, 2005), which is based on the CRC, notes that children and parents should be informed about the status of a child's illness, and the suggested treatment and care, in order that the child should understand.

Researchers often rely on information from significant adults, like parents, when collecting data about children's thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Kortesluoma, Hentinen, & Nikkon, 2003). However, interviews with children and their parents can help health professionals to understand them better, thus helping them to help the children through unfamiliar procedures and in their efforts to provide high-quality care for children.

## AIM

The aim of this study was to describe children's and parents' perceptions after a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) examination.

## METHOD

In the present study, a qualitative approach with a phenomenographical direction has been used.

## Sample

The children and parents who participated in this study were selected consecutively for an interview. Inclusion criteria were that all participants could understand and speak Swedish. The participant children were a

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The result from the manuscript has been previously presented in ECR March 2012 in Vienna.

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mix of both genders and aged 6-10 years. From a developmental psychology point of view, children aged between 6 and 10 years were selected as these are children who attend school from Grade 0 to Grade 4. The participating children had undergone their first ever MRI examination. The parents who accompanied their child to the examination were also interviewed. The loss rate in this study was 10 children with parents and was because of that some children had their examinations with pharmacological sedation and others because of cancellations or refusal to participate.

### **Instrument**

Semistructured interviews with open questions were used. The author who performed the interviews (JG) allowed the respondent to talk about a phenomenon and its importance to them rather than their being guided by the author's interest (Polit & Beck, 2006). Open questions increase the reliability of the resulting material when a child's views are to be investigated, and they also allow the child to describe their views in their own words (Kortesluoma et al., 2003). An interview guide was designed and was used as a topic guide to ensure that all topics were relevant (Polit & Beck, 2006). One or more topics were formulated based on the open questions, trying to access different aspects of a phenomenon (Uljens, 1989).

### **Implementation**

During the period from September 2004 to May 2005, a total of 18 children and their parents were asked to participate in the study. Finally, interviews were made with eight children who had recently undergone an MRI examination, together with their parents. Of these eight children, five were girls and three were boys. The parents were interviewed together with their child and asked to explain what they had done, while at home, to prepare themselves and their child and what they had thought about in relation to the pending examination. The authors were not present during the MRI examination of the children included in this study.

Together with an invitation to participate, the parents received written information about the study. Those who wished to participate were asked to give their written consent using an enclosed prestamped reply envelope. One of the authors then contacted each family by telephone a few days before the examination. After the MRI examination, each child was interviewed first with parent present; thereafter, the parents were interviewed together with the child. The interviews were recorded and written out verbatim.

### **Analysis**

A phenomenographical approach was used to analyze the interviews. The first step in the analysis was to get

acquainted with the material and form an overall impression. The next step was to find similarities and differences in the interviewee's statements (Marton, 1981). The aim was to sort the perceptions into contents wise different groups (Uljens, 1989) by comparing the similarities and differences in the expressed perceptions. These groups were formulated so that the content was reflected or characterized as well as possible called description categories. They are clear ideas that are brought together to describe a persons perceived world (Marton, 1981). Description categories arise to clearly separate the thoughts of the thinking and the thinker. Thereafter, the result reliability and validity were tested (Uljens, 1989).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Advisory recommendations have been given by the Swedish Health Scientific Ethics Board at the Department of Health Sciences, Lund (VEN A8-04). The children gave their verbal assent, and all the parents gave their written informed consent (World Medical Association, 2008).

## **RESULTS**

The results are presented on the basis of the description categories that emerged from the analysis (Table 1).

### **Children's and Parent's Perceptions of Security**

**Preparation Gave Security.** Preexamination visits to the MRI examination room were offered, and the participating children and parents often noted that they perceived the possibility of a visit to the MRI examination room before the examination as enhancing their feeling of security. Some children wished to have an information leaflet about the MRI examination sent home to them before the examination date.

The children noted that they would like to have had known more information before the examination; for example, a chance to look around the examination room, to see what was behind the MRI scanner, and listen to the sound as they had been informed that the machine was noisy.

The parents, who had seen photographs of an MRI examination while on the ward with their children before the examination, felt that this form of preparation was useful. One parent felt more secure as she had a previous experience of what would take place.

**Parents Presence During the Examination Gave the Children a Sense of Security.** The interviews revealed that the participating children found it comforting that their parents were with them in the examination room. Some children could see their parents throughout the examination, whereas others felt their presence by touch. Some of the children talked to their parents when the

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