

Physical Assessment of the Paediatric Patient: An education resource for Registered Nurses

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Introduction

The purpose of this poster presentation is to provide registered nurses with the knowledge required to perform a comprehensive physical assessment of a paediatric patient. The emphasis of this poster is on the early detection and treatment of an ill child to prevent deterioration, which can occur rapidly in children with catastrophic and at times irreversible effects.

Background

The primary and secondary surveys outline the systematic approach for a complete head-to-toe assessment, which ensures all the body systems are considered. Firstly, the primary survey involves observing the child's airway, breathing, circulation, and disability. The secondary survey should be commenced once the child is stable and no further medical intervention related to the primary assessment is required.

The poster then discusses the weight, anatomical and psychological differences seen in a child compared to the assessment of an adult. The clinical importance of a child's weight relates to the dosage and administration of medications and fluids, which are calculated on the child's weight per kilogram. The size of the child's airways and the significance of blood loss are also described.

Family-centred care is the principal focus when caring for ill children. The poster provides registered nurses with skills and strategies for effective communication and a holistic nursing approach to provide the best outcome for both the child and family.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the poster has provided registered nurses with a comprehensive and systematic overview of assessing a child and some strategies and skills to complete these assessments effectively.