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Can pictures of the nature influence anxiety and well-being during elective surgery in local anesthesia?

Elinor Nielsen

Vrinnevisjukhuset Hospital, Sweden

Background: Patients going through surgery in local anesthesia often have a sense of anxiety and stress and thus need support to relax. Different distracting intervention is known to reduce the anxiety and stress. Pictures of the nature, has to our knowledge not been used to support patients comfort during surgery in local anesthesia.

Purpose: The aim was to evaluate the effects of looking at pictures of the nature on patients' experience of anxiety, relaxation, well-being, and pain during elective surgery in local anesthesia.

Design: A three-armed randomized intervention was performed at three different hospitals.

Methods: Adult patients undergoing surgery in local anesthesia were consecutively randomized into three groups, one group looking at pictures of the nature on an Ipad, one group listening to sedative instrumental music and one control group receiving ordinary care during surgery. State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) short form was filled in before the surgery and just before discharge STAI and VAS-scales on anxiety, relaxation, well-being, and pain were filled in.

Preliminary results: Patients n=240 (54% women), with a mean age of 58 (± 17) years participated in the study. There was no difference between the three groups related to anxiety after surgery. Younger patients had significantly higher degree of anxiety and lower degree of relaxation and wellbeing ($p < 0.05$), postoperatively.

Conclusion: Looking at pictures of nature during surgery in local anesthesia is as relaxing as listening to sedative instrumental music. Offering patients to look at nature pictures could be a complement to listening to music.

Biography

Elinor Nielsen is specialist operation theater nurse since 1989 and often is responsible of patients undergoing surgery in local anesthesia.

Notes: