ABSTRACT# 16

Name of Trainee: Meghan Wilson (meghan.wilson@yale.edu)
Mentors: Melissa Langham (melissa.langham@yale.edu)
Type of Trainee: Resident

Title: Chaperones for Medical Examinations of Older Children and Adolescents: Who, when and for what?
Wilson, Meghan; Patel, Seema; Langham, Melissa
Yale University School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine

Background: A medical chaperone is a person who serves as a witness for a patient and healthcare practitioner during a medical examination. A chaperone may help emphasize the professional nature of the interaction and have a witness of the interaction in case of misunderstanding. Pediatric literature regarding medical chaperone use is limited. The purpose of our investigation is to understand attitudes and beliefs of parents and children towards chaperones use during pediatric physical exams.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional study of children 8-18 years and their parents, who presented to a children’s hospital to receive care. Those who consented to participate received anonymous surveys, which collected demographic data and asked which individuals should be in the room for different aspects of the child’s physical examination. Data were collected with electronic tablets using Qualtrics XM online survey platform.

Results: 79 patients and 61 parents completed the survey. Mean patient age was 14 years; 56% were female. Mean parent age was 41 years; 85% were female. Of patients, 81% responded that they were heterosexual. When being examined by a provider of the opposite sex as compared to a same sex provider, there were significant differences in preferences among female patients for exam of the breasts, genitalia, and rectum, but not the throat, heart/lungs, or abdomen. Male patients did not have any significant preference for any aspects of the exam by provider type. There was no difference in parent preferences when their child was being examined by a provider of the same vs. opposite sex as their child.

Conclusion: This study indicates adolescent females, but not males, have significant differences for who they prefer in the room for certain aspects of the physical exam. A minority of patients and parents preferred to have a chaperone; however, the majority preferred to have a parent in the room. Patient and parent considerations should be considered when creating policies for the use of medical chaperones.

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