

Multi-colored uniforms improve perceptions of hospital nurses among children and parents

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Putting hospital nurses in brightly coloured, unconventional uniforms makes children more comfortable and parents more confident, according to a study in the April issue of the *Journal of Clinical Nursing*.

Researchers from the University of Florence, Italy, surveyed a total of 112 [children](#) before and after nurses on two paediatric wards at Meyer Children's Hospital started wearing colourful new uniforms. The children, who had an average age of 10, were split into two groups of 56 and one parent was interviewed for each child taking part.

Five different uniforms were chosen by a local [charity](#), from 4,500 designs drawn by pre-school and school age children who had been admitted to paediatric wards all over Italy. They were then manufactured by a commercial company and donated to the hospital.

Before the new uniforms were introduced to the wards, the nurses wore conventional single-coloured trousers and tops.

Key findings included:

- The researchers asked the children to give them one word that described the nurse. 96% used positive words about the nurses after the new uniforms were introduced, compared with 82% before.

- The [parents](#) also gave the nurses higher scores on a one to five scale. Adequacy in the role rose from 4.0 to 4.7, not frightening for their child rose from 4.4 to 4.7, reassuring for the parent rose from 4.0 to 4.5 and fun doubled from 2.3 to 4.6.
- Although the children's perception of the nurses improved, their perceptions of the hospital itself only showed slight improvements in the more fun and less frightening categories.
- 76% of the children preferred the new uniforms, 13% preferred the traditional attire and 4% would have preferred to see them in ordinary clothes.

The 112 children who took part in the study ranged from six to 16 and the before and after groups of 56 were matched as closely as possible. There were 35 boys and 21 girls in each group, the average age was just over 10 and 32 children were from a medical ward and 24 from a surgical ward. They had been in hospital for an average of three to four days when they took part in the study.

"Our study showed that parents and children alike preferred to see the paediatric nurses in brightly coloured, non-conventional uniforms" says lead author Filippo Festini, Professor of Nursing Science at the University of Florence.

"The children told us they felt more positive about the nurses who were caring for them and a particularly significant result was that the parents did not see the new uniforms as less professional. In fact, it increased their positive perceptions of the nurses.

"Although the new uniforms did not significantly improve the children's view on the hospital itself, they made the children feel more comfortable about the nurses who were caring for them and that is a very important

factor on a paediatric ward."

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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