

# Parent-clinician communication about children's drug reactions needs improvement

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Many parents are dissatisfied with communication regarding adverse drug reactions experienced by their child, and the implications of such reactions for the child's future use of medicines, according to a new study published Oct. 10 in the open access journal *PLOS ONE* by Bridget Young from the University of Liverpool, UK and colleagues.

The researchers interviewed parents of 44 children who had a suspected adverse drug reaction for their study. They found that the majority of parents in their study were dissatisfied with the clarity and timing of communications from doctors and nurses, and were unsure whether a child's reaction to a drug affected future use of the medicine.

Parents whose children had cancer were the exception to this, as most of them expressed confidence in the way their clinicians explained the risks associated with medicines and managed side effects that developed during their child's treatment. In addition, the researchers observed that parents linked symptoms to medicines using reasoning similar to that used by clinicians to evaluate the side effects of medicines.

According to the authors, there are currently few guidelines to help clinicians communicate with families about side effects of drugs prescribed to children, which is likely to create confusion for parents of [sick children](#) who suffer [adverse drug reactions](#).

The authors suggest that this similar reasoning used by clinicians and parents to link children's side effects to drugs could be used as a starting

point to improve communication between clinicians and parents about children's' medications. Bridget Young said "Some parents are very distressed by the way clinicians deal with suspected side effects to common medicines and we are now working with [clinicians](#) to work out the best way to improve things".

**More information:** Arnott J, Hesselgreaves H, Nunn AJ, Peak M, Pirmohamed M, et al. (2012) Enhancing Communication about Paediatric Medicines: Lessons from a Qualitative Study of Parents' Experiences of Their Child's Suspected Adverse Drug Reaction. PLoS ONE 7(10): e46022. [doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0046022](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0046022)

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