

AUA: Medical clowns may benefit pediatric surgical outcomes

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(HealthDay)—If laughter is the best medicine, that may be doubly true for children undergoing surgery who are cheered up by visiting clowns, according to research scheduled to be presented Friday at the annual meeting of the American Urological Association (AUA), held from May 15 to 19 in New Orleans.

The study included children ages 2 to 16 undergoing outpatient urologic surgeries at the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem. The children were divided into two groups—in one group, the surgical team included a "medical clown" in the operating room to help entertain the children.

The results suggest a comical intervention can make a serious impact on children's well-being: The clown's antics were tied to less anxiety for

children before and after surgery, less time in the [operating room](#), lower levels of pain, and shorter time to discharge from the hospital. Related reductions in surgery and recovery time led to a cost savings of more than \$461 per patient.

"These data clearly demonstrate the unique role medical clowns play in reducing anxiety among children in an [outpatient surgery](#) setting as well as the amount of time spent in the hospital, which subsequently may lead to lower hospital costs," AUA spokesman Anthony Atala, M.D., director of the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C., said in an AUA news release.

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