

Art therapy, clown visits cut children's preoperative anxiety

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(HealthDay)—An intervention based on art therapy and clown visits can

reduce children's anxiety at preoperative separation from parents, according to a study published online Sept. 14 in the *Journal of Clinical Nursing*.

Alberto Dionigi, Ph.D., from the Federazione Nazionale Clowndottori in Cesena, and Paola Gremigni, Ph.D., from the University of Bologna, both in Italy, conducted an observational study involving 78 children (aged 3 to 11 years) undergoing general anesthesia for surgery who were allocated to two conditions. The [control group](#) underwent [general anesthesia](#) following standard practice, while the intervention group received integrated [art therapy](#) and clown visits upon arrival at the hospital and in the preoperating room. In both groups, the children received 0.5 mg/kg oral midazolam 30 minutes before surgery and had a parent present in the preoperating room.

The researchers observed a significant reduction in the modified Yale Preoperative Anxiety Scale scores at parental separation for children in the [intervention group](#) versus the control group. Most parents and nurses scored the intervention as effective for reducing children's anxiety.

"This study found that an intervention based on art therapy and clown visits enhanced the effect of midazolam in reducing children's anxiety at preoperative separation from parents," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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