POSSUM dancing to a different beat

Our innovative POSSUM (Paediatric Outpatient Sedation Support Under Multi-disciplinary team) Clinic is providing new ways to guide children safely through procedures.

The clinic aims to provide restraint-free sedation for kids who have endured multiple failed attempts of invasive procedures. These procedures may include injections, infusions and IV drips.

Dr Adrian Ting, POSSUM Medical Lead and Paediatric Specialist, says the clinic was started to deliver a different approach to manage invasive procedures that cause significant anxiety and distress in children with specific challenges, for example intellectual or physical impairment.

“Each procedure is individually designed. We use a combination of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic support,” Dr Ting said.

“Our team consists of Paediatric Specialists, supporting medical staff, nurses, music therapy, occupational therapy, psychology and social work. A frequent approach at POSSUM is the use of pre-medications, music therapy and nitrous oxide (happy gas).”

Music therapy is one of the key differentiating techniques. Registered Music Therapist Cassandra Huntley uses music to support children who visit POSSUM to engage in a way that switches on the ‘relaxation response’, they often begin to feel a sense of calm, becoming more relaxed and less anxious.

“The power of music therapy cannot be underestimated but it is often misunderstood,” Ms Huntley said.

“It can assist a child with reduction in fear, stress and experience of pain. By tapping into the intrinsic qualities of music such as rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and repetition, music therapy aims to provide cognitive planning and predictability, physiological regulation, relaxation and emotional stability when supporting an anxious child.”

Craig, father of a POSSUM patient, said: “The positive impact the clinic has made for our family is huge. In the past, knowing we’d have to help hold our son down caused anxiety for the whole family. For his last procedure we couldn’t believe the difference.”

In the past 12 months POSSUM has provided support for more than 50 procedures to more than 40 patients.

The ultimate aim is to make the child comfortable enough that when they require healthcare in future there is no need for sedation and high levels of stress.
MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Media are invited to speak to Craig about their experience at the POSSUM Clinic. Cassandra Huntley will also take us to one of the procedural rooms and explain the POSSUM approach.

When: Wednesday 16 April 2018, 10am
Where: Meet at SCUH Main Entrance.

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