Biofeedback Relaxation App May Help Kids During Medical Procedures

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A new Pain Practice study indicates that biofeedback-assisted relaxation may help manage pain and anxiety in children undergoing medical procedures.

BrightHearts is a biofeedback mediation relaxation app designed for mobile phones and tablet computers that responds to changes in heart rate and can be used to teach children biofeedback assisted relaxation.

In the study of 30 children aged 7 to 18 years undergoing a medical procedure (peripheral blood collection, botulinum toxin injections, or intravenous cannula insertion), BrightHearts was acceptable to patients, their parents, and their healthcare providers. The pilot study also demonstrated that the use of BrightHearts did not impede the administration of medical procedures and in some cases was perceived to facilitate the procedure. The majority of patients, parents and healthcare providers indicated that they would use BrightHearts again during a procedure.

“BrightHearts taps into children’s interest in devices like smart phones and tablets,” said co-author Dr. Angela Morrow, of The Children’s Hospital at Westmead and the University of Sydney, in Australia. “Biofeedback is a modality that we hope will empower children and help them to manage their pain and anxiety without the need for medications.”

Additional Information


About Journal

Pain Practice, the official journal of the World Institute of Pain, publishes international multidisciplinary articles on pain and analgesia that provide its readership with up-to-date research, evaluation methods, and techniques for pain management. Special sections including the Consultant’s Corner, Images in Pain Practice, Case Studies from Mayo, Tutorials, and the Evidence-Based Medicine combine to give pain researchers, pain clinicians and pain fellows in training a systematic approach to continuing education in pain medicine. Prior to publication, all articles and reviews undergo peer review by at least two experts in the field.

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