



**Association for the
Welfare of Child Health**

The Psychosocial Care of Children and their Families in Hospital

AWCH 2005 NATIONAL SURVEY REPORT



2005 NATIONAL SURVEY REPORT

1. Children shall be admitted to hospital only if the care they require cannot be equally well provided at home or on a day basis.



2. Children in hospital shall have the right to have their parents or parent substitute with them at all times.



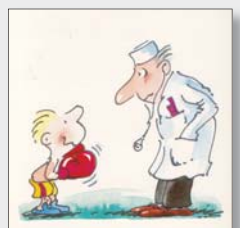
3. Accommodation should be offered to all parents and they should be helped and encouraged to stay. Parents should not need to incur additional costs or suffer loss of income. In order to share in the care of their child, parents should be kept informed about ward routine and their active participation encouraged.



4. Children and parents shall have the right to be informed in a manner appropriate to age and understanding. Steps should be taken to mitigate physical and emotional stress.



5. Children and parents have the right to informed participation in all decisions involving their health care. Every child shall be protected from unnecessary medical treatment and investigation.



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILD HEALTH

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ISBN 0-9593666-3-6



Association for the Welfare of Child Health

The Association for the Welfare of Child Health is funded by the NSW Department of Health



Acknowledgements

The *AWCH 2005 National Survey Report on the Psychosocial Care of Children and Their Families in Hospital* is the result of the dedication and contributions of many individuals and organisations, each sharing a commitment to improving the health and well-being of children and young people.

On behalf of the Association for the Welfare of Child Health (AWCH), I would like to acknowledge the wide range of people who took part in the national survey and express deep gratitude to all who contributed to the project's development through its various stages.

I would like to thank the hospital staff who took the time to respond to the survey. AWCH appreciates how difficult it can be with current workloads to allocate the time to fill in questionnaires. The valuable information gained will contribute immeasurably to improving the quality of care for children and young people receiving health care in Australia.

I would like to express appreciation to Trisha Durning from the University of Western Sydney and Anne Cutler from AWCH National Office who worked together to conduct the survey and analyse the data received.

I would also like to thank members of AWCH and others who participated in the project for their time, support and expert input into the development of recommendations arising out of the report.

It would have been impossible to undertake this project without the funding provided by Fund AWCH and the opportunity to conduct the project through UWS Cooperative Programs.

I would also like to acknowledge the continuing support of NSW Health through its provision of a non-government organisation grant to run the operations of the National Association for the Welfare of Child Health.

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Preface

Since 1973 the Association for the Welfare of Child Health has been one of Australia's strongest advocates for children, particularly children in hospital. In these times when recommendations quite correctly need to be based on data, AWCH is to be congratulated for this survey, which gives information about how changes in health care are delivered to children and young people in hospital in 2004, compared with the situation when last survey was undertaken in 1992.

There have been many improvements, but there is still a long way to go.

It would be difficult to argue with any of the recommendations in this report. I find it a little sad that they have to be made at all, as we should be providing these fairly basic psychosocial supports for children and their families far more widely than at present.

So whose responsibility is it to provide this support? We all share this responsibility. Everyone who cares about children should also be an advocate for improving services for children. Since 1973 there have been many excellent changes, and these will continue as AWCH works effectively with like-minded organisations and with the government. These improvements are likely to continue at a faster pace if more people who care about children speak up on their behalf.

Children's Hospitals Australasia has a very strong view about the importance of strong advocacy for child health. We congratulate AWCH on this important report.

Kim Oates

President

Children's Hospitals Australasia

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