

Anxiety Soul- A Cardiac and Child Life initiative to improve pediatric pre-operative anxiety

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Problem Statement

Children with congenital heart disease and their parents often endure substantial stress prior to surgery. Besides general anaesthesia, patients must undergo blood tests and diagnostic procedures, causing discomfort and anxiety.

Service and operational gaps have limited effective preparation support for patients and their families, resulting in heightened anxiety levels for both parents and their children.

Patient is only admitted 1 day before or on the day of surgery

No SOP/ streamlined workflow

Child Life Therapy support is only activated post-surgery

Potential Solutions

High pre-surgery anxiety levels

Parents unsure of how to explain procedure to child

Child Life Therapists unable to provide timely support

Lack of developmentally appropriate knowledge

Lack of accessibility to developmentally appropriate support resources

Patient only admitted on surgery day- insufficient time

Medical team miss out raising referrals

1

Paediatric-appropriate resources to be developed and made more accessible to families

2

A new SOP to be created where: patients would be admitted 1 day beforehand and a timely pre procedure session with the Child Life Therapist would be scheduled to help allay any further concerns and/or anxieties

Project Aim

Reduce preoperative anxiety levels and enhance hospital experience by streamlining processes and implementing a support programme.

To reduce preoperative anxiety in children (4-10 years old) undergoing cardiac surgeries

To improve parental hospital experience

Target Time: 12 months

Target Outcome: 50% reduction in pre/post mYPAS_SF scores

Lessons Learnt

Perseverance & Resilience

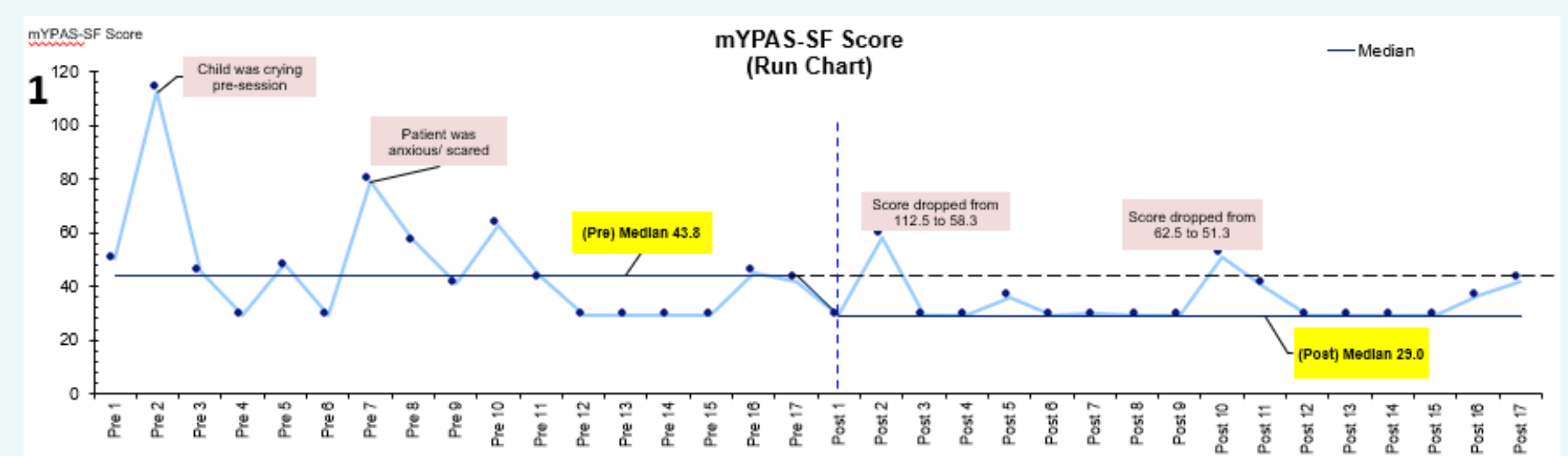
Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, there was a need to constantly focus on the intent to improve processes and work towards alleviating pre surgery anxieties.

Partnerships & Collaborations

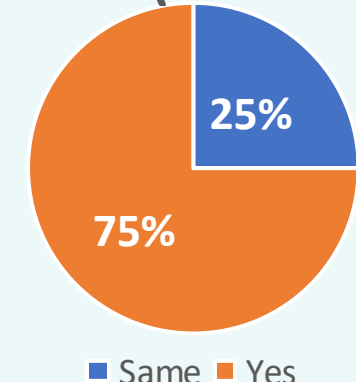
Meaningful solutions are created when there is partnership and collaboration with patients and their caregivers. This is fundamental in ensuring positive and sustainable patient outcomes in the long run.

Outcomes & Impacts

April 2021 – May 2023 N = 18

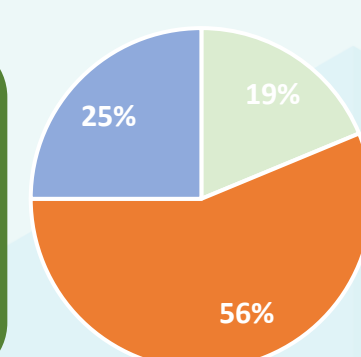


SAM-Pre&Post (Emotion)



75% Improvement self-assessment emotional scores

SAM-Pre&Post (Strength)



56% Improvement self-assessment strength scores

Solutions were implemented simultaneously. Data analysis demonstrated substantial improvements (as per fig. above). **94%** of parents also found overall programme to be beneficial. This initiative has been successful in alleviating preoperative anxieties. Since September 2023, this initiative has been included as a standard service offered to patients undergoing atrial septal defect and ventricular septal defect correction surgeries.