

## Contributions of nursing through play to the well-being of scalped children and adolescents

Contribuição da enfermagem através do lúdico para o bem estar de crianças e adolescentes escarpeladas

Aportes de la enfermería a través del juego al bienestar de niños y adolescentes cabelludos

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### Abstract

**Objective:** To describe the contribution of nursing through play to the well-being of scalped children and adolescents. **Methodology:** Qualitative methodological research, developed in a Maternal and Child referral hospital in Belém/Pará. Five family members participated and data were collected between March and June 2023. **Results:** For data analysis, Bardin's content analysis technique was used, which allowed organizing two categories: Perception of the family member/guardian regarding the playful activity; Contributions of Nursing in the emotional condition of the child and adolescent victim of scalping with the use of playful activities. **Conclusion:** It was possible to identify that Nurses who use playful activities in care generate positive effects on the quality of life of scalping victims and their families. **Descriptors:** Child Health; Scalp; Nursing; Play Therapy.

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## Resumo

**Objetivo:** Descrever a contribuição da enfermagem através do lúdico para o bem-estar da criança e adolescente escarpada. **Metodologia:** Pesquisa metodológica qualitativa, desenvolvida em hospital de referência Materno-infantil em Belém/Pará. Participaram 5 familiares e os dados foram coletados entre março e junho de 2023. **Resultados:** Para análise dos dados utilizou-se a técnica de análise de conteúdo de Bardin que permitiu organizar duas categorias: Percepção do familiar/ responsável frente a atividade lúdica; Contribuições da Enfermagem no quadro emocional da criança e adolescente vítima de escarpamento com uso de atividades lúdicas. **Conclusão:** Foi possível identificar que os Enfermeiros que utilizam o lúdico na assistência, geram efeitos positivos na qualidade de vida das vítimas de escarpamento e de seus familiares.

**Descritores:** Saúde da Criança; Couro cabeludo; Enfermagem; Ludoterapia.

## Resumen

**Objetivo:** Describir la contribución de la enfermería a través del juego al bienestar de niños y adolescentes con cabellera rapada. **Método:** Se trata de una investigación metodológica cualitativa, desarrollada en un hospital materno infantil de referencia en Belém/Pará. Participaron 5 familiares y los datos fueron recolectados entre marzo y junio de 2023 mediante entrevistas individuales utilizando un guión elaborado por los investigadores. **Resultados:** Para analizar los datos se utilizó la técnica de análisis de contenido de Bardin, que permitió organizar dos categorías: Percepción del familiar/tutor sobre la actividad recreativa; Aportes de la Enfermería a la situación emocional de niños y adolescentes víctimas de scalping mediante actividades recreativas. **Conclusión:** Fue posible identificar que los enfermeros que utilizan el juego en sus cuidados generan efectos positivos en la calidad de vida de las víctimas de arrancamiento cabelludo y sus familias.

**Descriptores:** Salud Infantil; Cuero Cabelludo; Enfermería; Ludoterapia.

## INTRODUCTION

Life on the riverbank, unlike life in the city, relies on the river as a means of transportation, and therefore people use boats – also known as "voadora" or "rabeta" – as their main form of transport. In this context, there was a shift from traditional boats to motorboats, which is why accidents involving these boats began to be reported in the 1960s.<sup>1</sup>

According to a 2016 study, scalping is an accident that occurs when part of a boat's engine is unprotected and, due to

carelessness, part of the scalp is abruptly torn off with enough force to cause irreversible injuries to the victims.

According to the Amazon Foundation for Support of Studies and Research (FAPESPA)<sup>3</sup>, between 2006 and 2022, 173 accidents were recorded, a very high and worrying number for the community, agencies, and professionals responsible for assisting these people. Therefore, a plan was initiated that covers everything from accident prevention to



treatment at a maternal and child referral hospital.

Although state and municipal agencies and institutions provide information to prevent such accidents, they still occur on the boats of riverside families. As a consequence, these people suffer head injuries, facial and ear disfigurement, and other physical complications, in addition to generating social, emotional, and psychological problems.<sup>4</sup>

In this context, the greatest victims of this accident are children and adolescents, who undergo a long hospitalization process, consequently transforming their lives as they face pain, loss of body parts, separation from their homes, and loss of contact with family and friends. The families of these victims also experience distress, fear, anguish, and pain related to the severity of the injuries. Therefore, children and young victims of accidents require a biopsychosocial understanding, which consists of a holistic view of the human being and the process of illness, encompassing physical, psychological, social, and cultural aspects.<sup>5</sup>

Nursing care based on communication, which can be verbal and/or non-verbal, through dialogue and touch, with the aim of conveying tranquility, affection, comfort, security, attention, and

well-being, is a great ally of nursing in providing quality care to the person.<sup>6</sup>

In this context, the teaching of play is a fundamental resource used in undergraduate nursing courses, as it is a contemporary demand in the nurse's training process, given its contribution to care relationships with children, namely improving acceptance and adaptation to procedures; a resource for distraction and entertainment; non-pharmacological analgesia; and the reinterpretation of unpleasant previous experiences.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of scalping, play is a useful technology for promoting children's health in various care settings, as it enables a humanized care practice that is attentive to the child's developmental needs. This is because, through a playful approach, it is possible to develop and assess skills in the social, emotional, language, cognitive, and self-regulation areas, among others.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to describe the contribution of nursing through play to the well-being of children and adolescents who have suffered scalp injuries, and to identify the effects of the presented play activity on the well-being of children and adolescents with scalp injuries, as perceived by caregivers.

## METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive analysis study with a qualitative approach. Descriptive research seeks to describe the characteristics of a population, situation, individuals, phenomena, and their relationships.<sup>8</sup> The qualitative approach, on the other hand, works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes, where language, symbols, practices, relationships, and things are inseparable, thus enabling it to answer particular questions and understand the socially lived human reality.<sup>9</sup>

The research was conducted at the public maternal and child referral hospital, located in a neighborhood in the center of the city of Belém/Pará. It took place in the outpatient clinic designated for monitoring and assisting victims of scalping. The interviews were conducted with the parents and/or guardians of the minors who signed the Informed Consent Form and authorization for written accounts, images, and voice recordings. Data collection was carried out using a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions, conducted with the parents and/or guardians of the children and adolescents after they watched the playful activity developed by the researchers, with the aim of identifying the impact of the accident on the children/adolescents' daily life, and

identifying the contribution of the playful activity.

After approval from the Ethics Committee of the university and the hospital where the research was conducted, the researchers contacted the institution's authorities to schedule a day to approach the participants and invite them to participate in the research. During the approach with the participants, the objectives, relevance, risks, and benefits of the research were explained. Subsequently, a puppet show was presented, using puppets for the activity.

In the first part of the presentation, a story was told using a doll with the characteristics of a scalping victim. In the second part, the importance of the necessary care and follow-up with medical and nursing care was expressed through play, explaining how beneficial it will be to return home, to the religious community, to school, and to social interaction with family and friends. Finally, an opportunity was given for the audience to share their experiences related to the topic discussed, and there was considerable interaction between the researchers and the children/adolescents.

After the activity was presented, an interview was conducted with the guardians, as this allowed them to observe the activity and answer the proposed



questions related to the playful activity and the effects of scalping on the psychosocial aspects of this child and adolescent group.

The interview was conducted in a private location where participants felt comfortable answering the questions, and they were not identified because the researchers used an alphanumeric code with the letter E for interviewee, followed by a cardinal number in ascending order (e.g., "E1, E2, E3"), to individually identify each participant.

The interviews were audio-recorded using a Motorola smartphone. Participants were informed that they could interrupt the recordings at any time. The recordings were stored in the Google Drive cloud using the researchers' email accounts, where they are protected by passwords accessible only to the researchers. After complete transcription, the audio files were deleted.

For qualitative analysis, subjective data collected during the interview and observed during the play activity were used, employing thematic content analysis according to Bardin.<sup>10</sup>

In the first stage of data analysis, the pre-analysis involved organizing the collected materials and transcribing them in their entirety into the corpus, without removing any text or terms. Word was used to save all the material in order to avoid losing any information. In this stage, the

recorded interview data were transcribed faithfully without interference from the researchers.

In the second stage, the data was coded and aggregated into units that were the focus of the study. Responses to the most similar questions were grouped together, while those that differed were separated. Subsequently, an exhaustive reading of the material was conducted to understand each participant's responses.

In the third stage, categorization, the elements to be analyzed were separated into sets. In this work, the semantic category was used, which requires separating the elements into themes. Based on the participants' statements, these were divided into categories that encompass the objectives of the study, aggregating the results.

This study is based on the principles of Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council/Ministry of Health regarding research involving human beings. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee under opinions no. 5,850,682 and no. 5,915,426.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted with 5 parents/guardians in March and extended until June 2023. The profile of the young women identified by the alphanumeric code



J (J1, J2,...) who participated in the playful activity is shown in the table below:

**Table 1.** Profile of the children and adolescents participating in the playful activity of the research.

	Age	Education	Race/ethnicity	Gender
<b>J1</b>	10 years	4th grade (Elementary School)	Brown	F
<b>J2</b>	12 years	7th grade (Elementary School)	Brown	F
<b>J3</b>	15 years	1st year (High School)	Brown	F
<b>J4</b>	15 years	8th grade (Elementary School)	Brown	F
<b>J5</b>	14 years	7th grade (Elementary School)	Brown	F

**Source:** Research data, 2023.

In this study, all participants are female, all 5 are mixed-race, are between 10 and 15 years old, 1 is in high school, and 4 are in elementary school. This profile is consistent with the findings of a 2021 study, which shows that scalping victims are predominantly women, children or adolescents in the school-age phase of their lives.<sup>11</sup>

The profile of the individuals interviewed for this research is presented in the table below:

**Table 2.** Profile of the parents/guardians interviewed in the survey.

	Age	Education	Degree of kinship	Gender	Municipality of residence	Monthly income
<b>E1</b>	25 years	7th grade (Elementary School)	Mother	F	Juruti	Half the minimum wage
<b>E2</b>	27 years old	6th grade (Elementary School)	Mother	F	Curralinho	Half the minimum wage
<b>E3</b>	64 years old	7th grade (High School)	Grandmother	F	Saint Dominic of Capim	2 minimum wages
<b>E4</b>	38 years old	9th grade (Elementary School)	Father	M	Saint Sebastian of Boa Vista	1 minimum wage
<b>E5</b>	71 years old	2nd year (High School)	Uncle	M	Ananindeua	1 minimum wage

**Source:** Research data, 2023.

Regarding the adults interviewed, they are in the age range of 25 to 71 years old, 3 are female and 2 are male, including two mothers, one grandmother, one uncle, and one father. Regarding their level of education, three have incomplete primary education and two have incomplete secondary education. Their monthly income ranges from half the minimum wage to two minimum wages.

It was observed that appointments were scheduled during the research months,

but not all were able to attend due to logistical difficulties in reaching Belém because of the distance and financial limitations. Of these, one child did not attend the appointments, and seven were invited to participate in the research.

The main difficulty encountered is the small number of children and adolescents scheduled for appointments. The researchers were unaware that appointments were scheduled semi-annually and with such a small number of

children. This is because doctors develop implant care plans that require time and study, hence the long intervals between appointments.

On the other hand, the adults who agreed to participate in the interviews were very receptive. In each interview and playful activity, the parents and the girls showed themselves happy to participate, recounting the story of the accident, the difficulties and support from the professionals after the accident, and playing with the dolls.

After transcription, exhaustive reading of the material, and semantic separation according to the steps described by Bardin, two categories were constructed:

**Category 1 - Family member/caregiver's perception of the nursing staff's play activity.**

This category sought to understand the family members' perspective on the activity carried out before the interview and during the young woman's hospitalization, given that the accident victims remained hospitalized for months at the maternal and child referral hospital.

It is important to emphasize that playfulness has been introduced and developed with these young women since their admission to the institution; therefore, their caregivers have experience and expertise in witnessing activities such as

theater, doll play, painting, drawing, dance, and laughter therapy on numerous occasions. The following statements were highlighted in this regard:

*She got a little doll from her teacher today, so for sure [...] she will want to do the same thing you guys were playing with here, she'll remember. (E1)*

*This brings benefits to her, why? It stimulates the brain, removes shyness, resocializes her, and brings her closer to people. (E5)*

The comments reveal the satisfaction of these family members, who not only support the activities but also express how much they enjoyed everything that was developed for their daughters during this entire period.

The presentation revealed that showing a doll depicting a bandage on its leg – reminiscent of a graft performed by doctors – and a head without a scalp, evokes a sense of belonging, and the young woman identifies with it because she no longer has a scalp, and the doll represents a young girl in school. The accounts below demonstrate this:

*It is important because through the little dolls she remembers who she is at the moment and also the care of all the professionals who surround her, you in this case. (E2)*



*Because the little doll is already all perfect, all pretty, and that reminds me of some time long ago. (E3)*

For children and adolescents who have been victims of scalping, the suffering of hospitalization is compounded by the abrupt impact of the accident, since in addition to the daily routine and hospital environment, the children remain hospitalized for months and undergo surgeries and extreme care for their heads.<sup>5,12</sup>

In this context, playful activities serve to mitigate the impact of the accident, where professionals become sensitive to the overall health of the accident victims. One of the relevant aspects for comprehensive treatment is the inclusion of the family member/caregiver in the care process, since they will be responsible for the care when the children are discharged from the hospital.<sup>15</sup>

It is well known that family members, together with professionals, tend to see psychological and social improvement more quickly. Furthermore, it is important that parents/guardians are involved in the caregiving process to understand the importance of each stage and process, creating a relationship of affection, trust, and security with the professionals to minimize feelings of fear and distress that

are common during a delicate time for children and their caregivers.<sup>5</sup>

Through the playful activities developed, family members are able to perceive changes in the emotional and social aspects, stressful behaviors, or expressions of happiness on the part of the children/adolescents, since each activity developed had the intention of distracting, conversing, and playing.<sup>13</sup>

Playful care contributes to both the physical and emotional recovery of the patient and is linked to the release of negative feelings, thus allowing them to be more open to restoration; that is, negative thoughts only create barriers to the recovery process, and the use of playfulness is an ally in discovering a new path.<sup>16</sup>

## **Category 2 - Contributions of Nursing to the emotional well-being of children and adolescents who are victims of scalping, using play activities**

In this category, the objective was to identify the contributions of nursing practice through the use of play in the care of scalping victims during the recovery process, as well as contributions to the emotional and social aspects.

It is worth highlighting that for interaction between children and adolescents and nurses to occur, they need to use creative communication techniques, such as puppet shows or therapeutic play,



which spark interest, evoke positive emotions, and distract attention from suffering. According to these testimonies:

*To distract herself a little more and forget certain things that happened to her, the difficult parts of her life. (E4)*

*I am grateful to have you all there to give her attention, especially because it was a very cruel accident. (E1)*

The use of play activities by professionals has been applied as a therapeutic possibility capable of producing beneficial effects on the health of victims<sup>16</sup>, as well as on the environment, as evidenced in the statement below:

*Good for learning, because she learned a lot through the reading theater upstairs when we were hospitalized, they would come into the room to encourage the child and make her happier. (E2)*

This discourse reveals that the adoption of humanized practices, such as playful care, can bring significant contributions to the lives of patients, such as socialization, harmonization, joy, and happiness.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, the research revealed that children and adolescents interact more with both nurses and parents, which greatly improves their development, skills, and even treatment after a scalp injury accident.

In all interviews, those responsible expressed appreciation for the care provided by the nursing staff during the hospitalization. Their comments focused on the emotional well-being of these young women, with positive words, affection, playfulness, and all the emotional support they needed to feel comfortable expressing how they felt, as shown in the statements below:

*It is a very blessed area, I say this because these are people who dedicate themselves to the well-being of others. (E2)*

*The nurse advises her, talks to her, and says good things too. (E4)*

*Without the work of nursing, for me it is incomplete. It brings a very good sense of security and foundation for us. The nurse is the one who has contact with the patient, who provides the care. (E5)*

In practice, during their work routine, nursing professionals tend to reframe their actions with the goal of minimizing the suffering of patients. In this sense, when care involves children and adolescents, it is necessary to understand what strategies can be adopted to build bonds, promote health education, and direct activities in such a way that they result in improved adherence and health status, and above all, contribute to reducing the pain and suffering experienced.<sup>16</sup>

Puppet theater allows for the creation of characters that reflect the reality of children and adolescents, and conveys information about health and overcoming challenges in a cheerful, clear, and objective way. This can make it possible to understand the process being experienced and to look to the future in a positive way, allowing them to dream and achieve their goals.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, it is noteworthy that nursing utilizes these activities as positive strategies for distraction, entertainment, laughter, feelings of happiness, and stimulating these young people to be more creative. The play therapy developed by the nursing team contributes to behavioral improvement and social aspects, as it encourages creativity by perceiving the world in a simpler way.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, attention to scalping victims goes beyond guidance on self-care; it should not be limited to just advice and information about treatment. It involves acting at an existential level, valuing the uniqueness of each individual, his or her life story, and their aspirations for the future. These children and adolescents should be seen as people with particular issues and concerns, despite sharing feelings of fear, anguish, anxiety, anger, and despair.<sup>18</sup>

It is noted that the role of Nursing, according to the interviewees, is understood

as something that promotes the distraction and enjoyment of the child in the context in which they are inserted, causing them to disconnect from unpleasant experiences through play, games, and objects that have significance for them.<sup>16</sup>

Nursing care should be based on identifying the needs of users and their families, from a holistic and humanized perspective. Therefore, the nurse's actions in developing their activities should consider emotional, psychological, and social aspects.<sup>19</sup>

The importance of the nursing professional in the daily lives of patients is fundamental, both individually and as part of the multidisciplinary team. This professional must be prepared and sensitive to recognize the health needs of these users, helping them to face their reality in a less traumatic way.<sup>18</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This work provided the students with an enriching and extensive experience regarding the assistance provided to victims of scalping. It was possible to understand the entire process, from the victim's arrival at the hospital to the continuity of care when they return to their cities and come back to the hospital for ongoing follow-up.

The objectives of this study were achieved, as the researchers were able to



perceive the importance of the nursing role in the care process for these young women, and the family members reported the use of play therapy throughout the care process, bringing well-being and security to each child and adolescent victim of the accident.

The work was extremely valuable, and it was possible to observe the importance of play and nursing in the treatment of the young women. The children and their families expressed gratitude for the work done by the professionals who assisted them, as the entire hospital stay was difficult for the family and the victims.

The importance of writing works focused on this theme is highlighted, given that there are few published works on the topic addressed in this research. Even with significant government policies and qualified assistance, scalpings accidents occur every year in the interior cities of Pará. In this sense, treatment and care actions must encompass the entire lives of these people and not be limited to the physical aspect. Furthermore, it is always important to reinforce the relevance of Nursing in all the scenarios in which it is found.

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