

LIKE BEING IN ANOTHER WORLD

**Parents' experiences of their child being admitted
to a pediatric intensive care unit**

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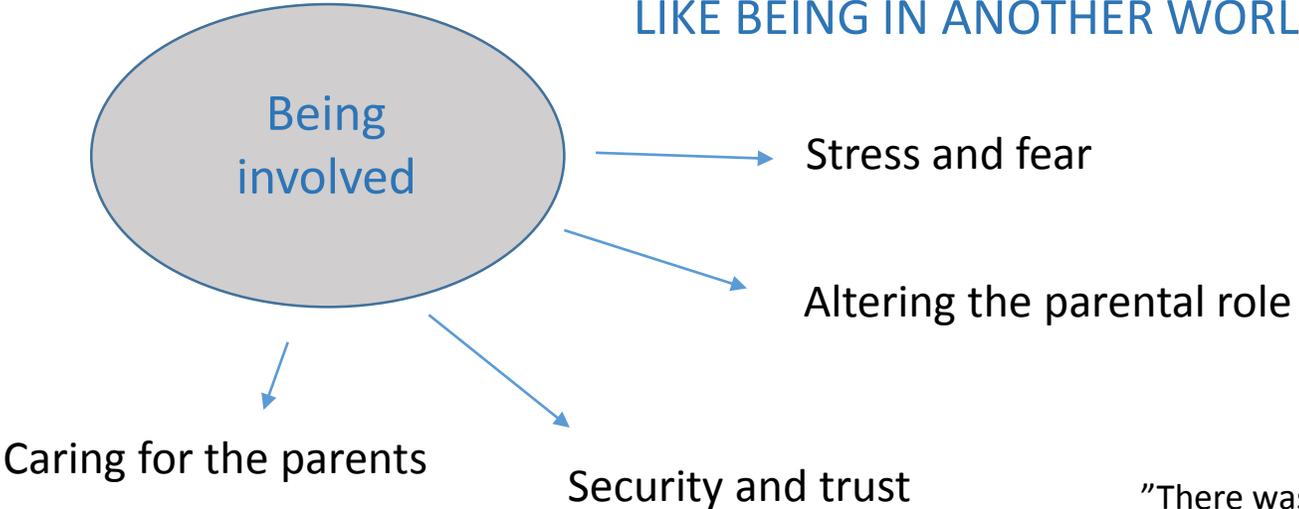
To have a child admitted to pediatric intensive care (PICU) is very stressful and filled with anxiety for the parents. Identifying and describing how the parents' experienced their child's care in PICU could facilitate for the PICU team to better support the parents and help them to handle the situation.

The parents' experience of the care in PICU is that it's a feeling of unreality in an unreal and strange place.

Many parents experience the PICU as frightening. The environment indicates that the activity is acute, stressful with a lot of sounds from different type of monitors and alarms. Interviews were held with 12 parents who had their child admitted to PICU. Their experiences resulted in two categories - "being involved" and "being informed" and seven sub-categories.

Theme	LIKE BEING IN ANOTHER WORLD						
Category	BEING INVOLVED				BEING INFORMED		
Sub-categories	Caring for the parents	Security and trust	Altering the parental role	Stress and fear	Importance of knowing	Interaction in the caring process	Being prepared

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"There was a baby in the cot and it was mine but I couldn't feel anything. I was just standing there watching"

"We could deal with the usual care and it felt so good to hold on to something ordinary"

"they must have done this a hundred times but they really showed they cared about our baby"

"It felt so good to just sit there and watch her"

"I just remember the surgeon said not live, he never said the word die"

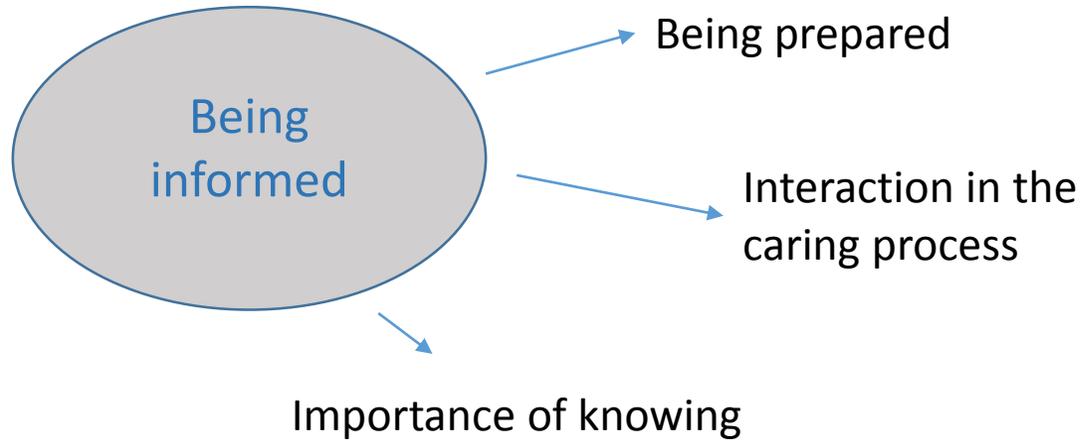


"we have always felt that it was our baby and those things we couldn't manage to do, we just handed it over"

"They told me a thousand times but nothing stuck, everything was just chaos"

"look at him, we take care of the machines "

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"I didn't want to hear about what's going to happen tomorrow, it was enough learning about today"

"there was someone at his side all the time and we always felt welcome"

"she explained it so very well and even if the drainage from the stomach was scary we understood the importance "

"the nurse was waiting for us and we washed her together and it felt so good"

"we got a lot of information and nothing happened without our knowledge"

" all the beeping and flashing lights made me very shattered. It was hard to concentrate on my child "

"it was very unpleasant but I knew what to expect"

" when we came in the morning we knew they would try to remove the ECMO cannula today and it would be a tough day "

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CONCLUSION

- The interviews of the parents indicate that the care in PICU is based on family-center care (FCC).
- Two components of FCC is information and participation and it emerge as the most important part for the parent. To be treated as a whole family and get a sense of being important in the care of the child is something the parents experienced as crucial. The collaboration between the PICU team and the parents was something that helped them and it decreased the stress and anxiety and gave them a sense of security and trust. Negative concerns of FCC could be parents get in the way of staff activities, introduce infection, breach patient confidentiality, increase the staffs workload and taking over the responsibility.
- Another way to help parents and their children after the care in PICU is to have follow-up service. A follow-up service provided by PICU nurses who have knowledge and understanding of the situation and the time they spent in PICU.
- The parents expressed that they couldn't take in all the information due to the stressful situation. A way to help the parents to understand the information and treatment plan is to use a diary. To have the information written down and read it when the situation is less stressful could make the parent understand the information better and also make it easier to handle the stressful memories from PICU