

About Homesickness in children in hospital

Overview

Every year children account for one million admissions to hospitals in Australia¹ – and the number is rising^{1,2}.

Children may be in hospital for a day, a week or even months, and they may be there for many different reasons, but there's something they all suffer from: homesickness.

Fifty per cent of children in hospital are reported to suffer from moderate to high levels of homesickness³⁻⁵.

What is homesickness?

Homesickness is the distress or impairment caused by separation from home⁴.

Young people are not all homesick for their parents – some miss home cooking or their family pet⁴.

Home is the cure for homesickness⁴.

Homesickness in children in hospital

Around 50% of hospitalised children aged 8 to 18 years suffer from moderate to severe homesickness³⁻⁵.

For children in hospital, homesickness can be severe and unpredictable³. In children with severe homesickness, symptoms get worse the longer they are away from home³.

Severe homesickness in children is associated with social and behavioural problems, symptoms of depression and anxiety, coping deficits, and feelings of helplessness³.

How the Curing Homesickness campaign can help

Curing Homesickness is a new fundraising initiative that brings children's hospitals from across Australia together, to get kids home from hospital sooner. We believe kids don't belong in hospital, they belong at home and we are rallying support from all round Australia to make sure we can cure homesickness for children in hospital.

How will funds raised help?

Donations will go towards helping kids in hospital get back home where they belong by funding vital clinical needs such as investing in research, the latest equipment and the amazing health professionals who deliver the care our children need.

Funds will be also used to cure homesickness by developing services to connect kids to home while in hospital and making kids feel a bit more at home during their hospital stay.



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References

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. Admitted patient care 2016–17: Australian hospital statistics. Health services series no. 84. Cat. No. HSE 201. Canberra: AIHW.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2014. Australian hospital statistics 2012–13. Health services series no. 54. Cat. no. HSE 145. Canberra: AIHW.

³ Thurber CA & Walton E. Am Acad Pediatr 2007;119(1):192.

⁴ Thurber CA et al. Children's Health Care 2007;36(1);1-28.

⁵ Stroebe M et al. Rev Gen Psychology 2015; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000037>.

Key Message	Supporting References
Definition of Homesickness	
Homesickness is the distress or impairment caused by separation from home.	Thurber CA & Walton E. Am Acad Pediatr 2007;119(1):192.
Young people are not all homesick for their parents – some miss home cooking or the family pet.	Thurber CA & Walton E. Am Acad Pediatr 2007;119(1):192.
Home is the cure for homesickness. 'Home' can have multiple meanings – loved ones, family members, familiar surroundings and objects, a feeling of reliability or predictability.	Thurber CA & Walton E. Am Acad Pediatr 2007;119(1):192.
Impact of Homesickness	
Around 50% of hospitalised children aged 8 to 18 years suffer from moderate to severe homesickness.	Thurber CA et al. Children's Health Care 2007;36(1);1-28. Thurber CA & Walton E. Am Acad Pediatr 2007;119(1):192. Stroebe M et al. Rev Gen Psychology 2015; http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000037
For children in hospital, homesickness can be severe and unpredictable.	Thurber CA et al. Children's Health Care 2007;36(1);1-28.
In children with severe homesickness, symptoms get worse the longer they are away from home.	Thurber CA & Walton E. Am Acad Pediatr 2007;119(1):192.
Severe homesickness in children is associated with social and behavioural problems, symptoms of depression and anxiety, coping deficits, and feelings of helplessness.	Thurber CA & Walton E. Am Acad Pediatr 2007;119(1):192.
Children and Hospital admissions	
Every year children account for one million admissions to hospitals in Australia* *Based on 936,342 admissions for people 0-19 years of age in 2016-17. This is the number of admissions. The same person may be admitted multiple times.	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. Admitted patient care 2016–17: Australian hospital statistics. Health services series no. 84. Cat. No. HSE 201. Canberra: AIHW.
The number of hospital admissions in children is rising.	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2014. Australian hospital statistics 2012–13. Health services series no. 54. Cat. no. HSE 145. Canberra: AIHW. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. Admitted patient care 2016–17: Australian hospital statistics. Health services series no. 84. Cat. No. HSE 201. Canberra: AIHW.



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