

Increasing the cooperation of children during procedures using a high-tech device



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SURGICAL CHALLENGE

Children can be difficult to handle in a dermatology procedure room. Needless to say, at any age, children are unpredictable regarding the amount of cooperation they are likely to offer to undergo an invasive treatment.

SOLUTION

We have been trying a lot of distraction techniques to keep children engaged during procedures. Many believe that it is the sight of the needle that scares them more than the pain per se. The use of virtual reality (VR) to distract patients from pain and reduce anxiety related to surgical procedures, in general, has been described before but not in dermatology.^{1,2} In our practice, we put to use a commercially available VR box (Fig 1) with a mobile phone mounted inside. The headgear with the box is placed on the child's head as they wait in the procedure room for topical local anesthetic cream to act. We usually put to use the parent's phone, which invariably has the child's favorite programs. The gadget is wiped with alcohol wipes before use in every patient. While waiting, they familiarize themselves with the gadget and tend to be less apprehensive about the procedure that is coming up. We find that children treated this way are cooperative, and the procedure is undertaken by both the patient and the operating clinician with utmost ease and comfort (Fig 2). This technique



Fig 1. Commercially available VR box without mobile phone mounted.

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Fig 2. Pediatric patient using VR box. **A**, Child wearing VR box with the mobile phone mounted. **B**, Child relaxing during waiting period enjoying his favorite program as the topical anesthesia takes effect. **C**, Patient on procedure table with clinician needling the molluscum contagiosum with the patient unaware of the same. **D**, Molluscum being scooped out with utmost cooperation of the child.

can be easily implemented and does not invite much investment, as these gadgets are readily available in mobile phone accessory shops and online retail stores. We also suggest studies with large samples to ascertain the validity of our observation.

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