

Mastering the art of conversation in Pediatrics – a key in reducing diagnostic errors

Stefana Cristina Alexoai¹, Diana Veronica Costache², Traian Mihaescu²

¹“Sfanta Maria” Emergency Hospital for Children, Iasi, Romania

²Clinic of Pulmonary Disease, Iasi, Romania

Learning objectives: Diagnostic errors in Pediatrics represent a branch which is less explored and accepted in our country. Mistakes are not easy to accept by anyone, and doctors make no exception. In order to carry out his activity in optimum conditions, a doctor must be versed not only in Pediatrics pathology, but also in child psychology. The main causes for diagnostic errors in Pediatrics are the wrong information received from the caregivers and the patient himself.

For small children, communication is difficult, given that they do not know all the necessary words, which prevents them from describing what is bothering them. Things are different for older children, which have a tendency to hide certain aspects about their life, but these exact details may cause further harm to their health.

Case information: The paper shows the cases of two children which describe perfectly the mentioned typologies. The first case is that of a two years old boy, known for an unique ventricle and epilepsy. At first he was diagnosed with sleepiness due to treatment with phenobarbital, but later on it was found that he suffered from cerebral thrombosis. The second case is that of a 12-years old girl diagnosed with epilepsy at 10 years old, undergoing treatment with divalproex sodium, who presented to the hospital for sleepiness, dizziness and headache. At the beginning of the anamnesis the little patient declared that she didn't take her treatment as it was prescribed. The toxicological testing of the blood revealed that indeed she took the clonazepam. After a long talk, the patient confessed a self-administration of pills, prior to her epilepsy diagnosis.

Discussion: The quality of the information gathered by the physician during his investigations is tightly connected to the communication abilities with the young patient, the observation awareness and the promptness showcased during the examination. The first case underlines the importance of good observational skills as the second case, the necessity of good communication abilities. Both aspects are vitals in the activity of every pediatrician.