Pediatric Cardiac Surgery: information giving, consent and parental perceptions of risk

Key Words: communication of risk, perceptions of risk, pediatric heart surgery, consent

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Abstract

Individual perceptions of risk may be a function of the format in which the information is framed. There is some evidence that graphical or pictorial presentation of risk and also opportunities to process risk information may improve understanding. The aim of this project is to assess whether understanding of the risks involved in pediatric heart surgery and parental satisfaction with the consent process vary according to the way in which risks and benefits are portrayed. We will compare the effectiveness of pictorial representations of risk with the standard process of information provision and consenting. We will assess parental understanding of risk and satisfaction with the consent process with the use of qualitative interviews. We will recruit around 50 parents attending the Bristol Royal Hospital for Children with a child who requires cardiac surgery. A range of surgical procedures will be included in order to allow for confounding according to severity of the procedure.