

Developing a point-of-care measurement to capture the impact of Child Life Specialists in a hospital setting



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Background

Child Life Specialists (CLSs) are certified experts on child development who support children and families in the hospital through:

- psychosocial support
- play-based interventions
- patient education

Potential outcomes of these services [1-3]:

- reduced children's anxiety
- improved compliance with procedures
- support for medical adherence
- reduced need for anaesthesia
- reduced hospital costs

Methods

Co-designed a measurement instrument with CLS practitioners

Three anonymous, linked surveys to be administered after each intervention (ongoing):

- CLS
- Child
- Parent/guardian

CLS
n = 11

Child
n = 7

Parent or guardian
n = 6

Discussion

Children receiving CLS support:

- **Participate** with the CLS
- **Return to their baseline** within a few minutes
- **Feel "extremely" supported** by their CLS

Parents and children receiving CLS support report that their time at the hospital went **better than expected**.

Parents feel **more equipped to support** their children

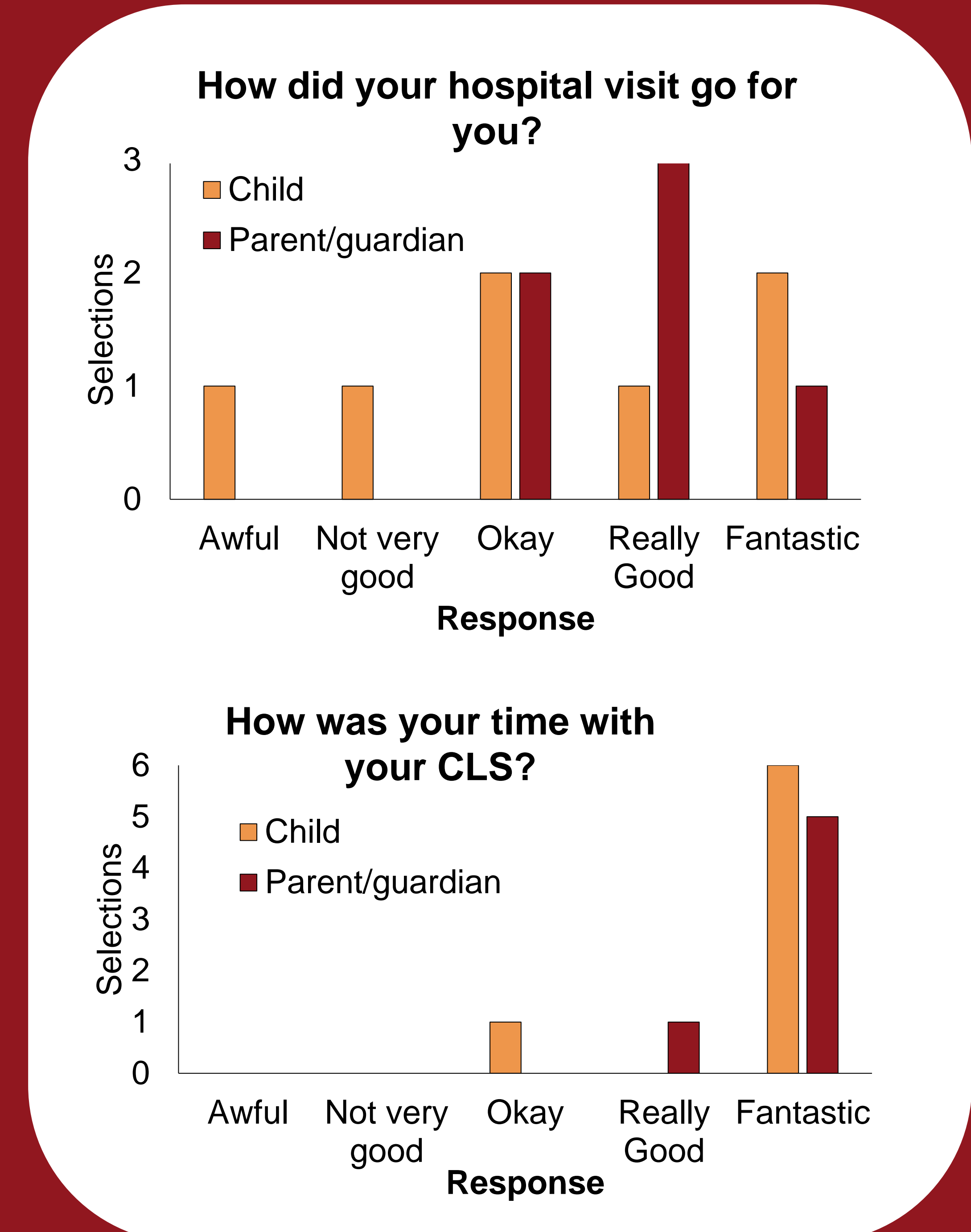
This work provides a multi-dimensional description of CLS impact at BC Children's Hospital

Strengths

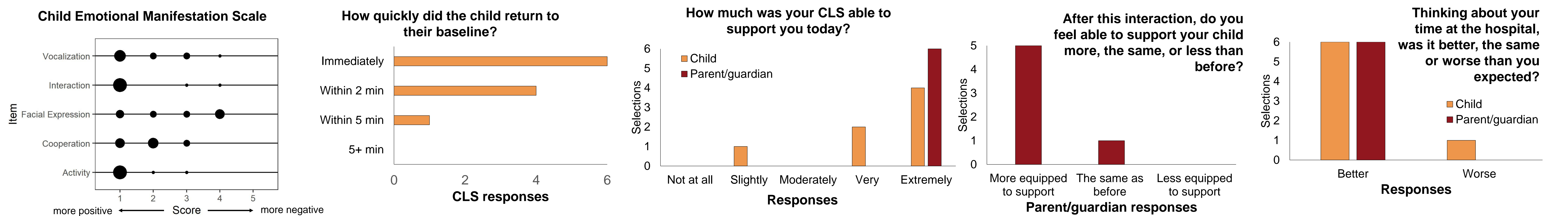
- Captures **real-world CLS actions** in a busy provincial children's hospital across multiple units
- Multiple perspectives on same encounter: CLS, child, parent

Limitations

- Random assignment not possible; CLS support is often reserved for complex cases
- Potential for response bias



Results



“ [CLS] helped everything feel less scary. - Child

“ I didn't know I would be able to make slime and play with toys at the hospital! - Child

“ [CLS] was a godsend. I could not believe that my child did not need to be held down and was actually cooperative and calm throughout the iv start. – Parent/guardian

[1] Boles et al., 2020 *Assoc Child Life Professionals*
 [2] Claridge et al., 2020 *J Child Life*
 [3] Durand et al., 2015 *J Amer Coll Radiology*
 openpeeps.com

