

## PREPARING CAREGIVERS TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE PRIMARY PALATOPLASTY

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**OBJECTIVE:** Caregivers compliance to Craniofacial Team's recommendation can be improved by providing information at an adequate level of understanding. The objective of this study was to identify the impact of a material for orientation of parents regarding the role of primary palatoplasty for speech production and for the need for continuing healthcare at hometown community to assure baby's clinical condition before surgery.

**METHOD:** A material addressing the anatomic and functional aspects of the velopharynx, its role in oral and nasal sound production, and importance of preparation of the baby for the palatoplasty was presented to a group of 41 caregivers of babies with cleft palate. Parent's responses to a questionnaire before and after accessing the material were compared. The 20 questions addressed identification of anatomical structures in images, understanding of terminology and aspects of palatoplasty. **RESULTS:** Parents understanding improved after accessing the material for all 20 questions, and the understanding of parents conditions increased between 3% and 69% after the material. Significant differences were observed for questions addressing the role of the velopharynx for sound production, the role of soft palate for velopharyngeal function and the role of the primary palatoplasty in the reconstruction of the velopharynx ( $p=0.001$ ).

**CONCLUSION:** The material had a significant impact in caregivers understanding of the role of the palatoplasty for speech production and velopharyngeal function. Sharing the material with community health agents may help improve parent's compliance to recommendations for pre-surgical follow-up care. Future studies are warranted.

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