

## A determination of the factors that affect the level of pediatric nurses' liking of children

Yurdagül ERDEM<sup>1</sup>, Veli DUYAN<sup>2</sup>

**Aim:** Every person under the age of 18 is a child. One's attitude towards children is made up of the person's basic beliefs about children and their reaction to the idea of being with children. Pediatric nurses are expected to understand children's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development, to advocate for children, and to show affection towards and interest in children. This study is conducted to determine the level of liking of children of nurses who are working at pediatric clinics.

**Materials and methods:** This descriptive study was conducted on 207 nurses employed at pediatric clinics of university and state hospitals. The study uses Barnett's Liking of Children Scale (BLOCS), a 14-item, 7-point Likert-type scale designed to assess the extent to which individuals have a favorable attitude towards children. The validity and reliability of the scale in Turkish has been determined by Duyan and Gelbal in 2008. The score range is 14-98, with high scores indicating that people like children more and low scores indicating that they like children less.

**Results:** In our study, the mean age of the nurses was  $31.76 \pm 6.25$ , 38.7% of them graduated from health programs in vocational schools, 67.3% of them were married and 81.7% of the married nurses had children. Hospitals run by the Ministry of Health employed 77.9% of the nurses, 95.7% of them are clinical nurses, and they have been working for an average of 11.3 years ( $136.28 \pm 86.52$  months). Each day, the nurses care for 15.63 children ( $\pm 29.87$ ). Just over half (54.8%) of them read books about children and 67.3% watched television news about children. A great majority of them (81.9%) knew children's games, with the mean number of children's games that nurses knew being  $3.32 \pm 1.88$ . Volunteer work was not found to be common; 94.0% of our subjects did not work at voluntary organizations. Of the nurses involved in this study, 49.2% of them were satisfied in their workplace while 50.8% of the nurses indicated they want to leave their workplace due to conditions of overwork and fatigue. The results of our study showed that the nurses' liking of children scores were very high ( $82.07 \pm 16.35$ ). There were not any significant differences between the pediatric nurses' scores with regard to personal factors such as workplace, age, parental status, employment status, or length of employment ( $P > 0.05$ ). On the other hand, factors like marital status, frequency in changing of workplace, the number of children they cared for daily, their interest in following news related to children, and knowledge of children's games were determined to be significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Overall, pediatric nurses display a relatively high level of liking of children. Furthermore, this level correlates with personal factors such as marital status, workplace turnover, the number of children cared for daily, a knowledge of children's games, and the desire to follow news about children.

**Key words:** Liking of children, nurse, children's hospital

### Pediatric hemşirelerinin çocuk sevmeye düzeylerine etki eden faktörlerin incelenmesi

**Amaç:** 18 yaşın altındaki her birey çocuktur. Çocuklara yönelik tutum, bir bireyin çocuklar ve çocuklarla birlikte olma konusundaki temel inancının yansımasıdır. Pediatri hemşirelerinin çocukların fiziksel, intellektüel, duygusal-

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Kırıkkale University, Kırıkkale - TURKEY

<sup>2</sup> Department of Social Work, Faculty of Health Sciences, Ankara University, Ankara - TURKEY

**Correspondence:** Veli DUYAN, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Health Sciences, Ankara University, Ankara - TURKEY  
E-mail: veli.duyan@health.ankara.edu.tr

sosyal gelişimsel farklılıklarını anlamaları, çocukları savunmaları, onlara gerekli sevgi ve ilgiyi göstermeleri beklenir. Bu çalışma, çocuk servislerinde görev yapan hemşirelerin çocukları sevmeye durumlarını belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır.

**Yöntem ve gereç:** Çalışma, Ankara ilinde Sağlık Bakanlığı ve Üniversiteye bağlı üç çocuk hastanesinde çalışan 207 hemşire üzerinde yapılmıştır. Çalışmada Barnett Çocuk Sevmeye Ölçeği (Barnett Liking of Children Scale – BLOCS) kullanılmıştır. Bu ölçek insanların çocuklara yönelik tutumlarını ölçme amacıyla geliştirilmiş, 14 sorulu, 7'li likert tipinde bir değerlendirme aracıdır. Duyan ve Gelbal 2008 yılında Türkiye için geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik çalışması yapmıştır. Ölçekten 14-98 arasında puan alınabilmekte, yüksek puan, insanların çocukları daha fazla sevdiklerini; düşük puan çocukları sevmeye düzeyinin düşük olduğunu göstermektedir.

**Bulgular:** Çalışmaya katılan hemşirelerin yaş ortalaması  $\bar{X} = 31,76 \pm 6,25$  olup, % 38,7'si SML mezunu, % 67,3'ü evli, evli kadınların % 81,7'sinin çocuğu olduğu, % 77,9'unun bakanlık hastanesinde çalıştığı, % 95,7'sinin servis hemşiresi olduğu, ortalama  $\bar{X} = 136,28 \pm 86,52$  ay (yaklaşık 11,3 yıl) görev yaptıkları,  $\bar{X} = 15,63 \pm 29,87$  günlük çocuk hasta baktıkları, % 54,8'inin bir çocuk kitabı bildikleri, % 67,3'ünün çocuklarla ilgili haber izledikleri, % 81,9'unun çocuk oyunları bildiği, ortalama  $\bar{X} = 3,32 \pm 1,88$  çocuk oyunu bildikleri, çoğunun (% 94,0) gönüllü kurumlarda çalışmadıkları, % 49,2'sinin çalıştığı iş yerinden ayrılmak istemediği, % 50,8'inin yoğun iş yükü, yorgunluk, yönetsel destek eksikliği nedeniyle ayrılmak istediği belirlenmiştir. Hemşirelerin çocuk sevmeye ölçeğinden ortalama  $\bar{X} = 82,07 \pm 16,35$  puan aldıkları; çocuk sevmeye puanı ile çalışılan yer, yaş, çocuk sahibi olma, eğitim durumu, görev, çalışma süresi arasında istatistiksel farkın anlamlı olmadığı ( $P > 0,05$ ); çocuk sevmeye puanı ile medeni durum, günlük bakılan çocuk sayısı, çocuk oyunlarını bilme ve çocuk haberlerini izleme durumu arasındaki farkın anlamlı olduğu belirlenmiştir ( $P < 0,05$ ).

**Sonuç:** Çocuk hemşirelerinin çocuk sevmeye durumlarının yüksek olduğu, bu durumun medeni durum, iş yeri değiştirme sıklığı, günlük hizmet verilen çocuk sayısı, çocuk oyunlarını bilme, çocuk haberlerini izleme durumundan etkilendiği saptanmıştır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Çocuk sevmeye, hemşire, çocuk hastanesi

## Introduction

Pediatric nursing is defined as “the art and science of giving nursing care to children from birth through adolescence with emphasis on the physical growth, and mental, emotional and psycho-social development” (1). This is why pediatric nurses are expected to understand differences in children's physical, intellectual, emotional-social developments, advocate for them and exhibit affection towards and care for them (1,2). When the history of pediatric nursing is considered, it can be seen that the field is affected by the events and developments going on in the world. Between 1650 and 1880, nurses focused on children's nutrition, hydration, hygiene, and prevention from infectious diseases (2,3). After the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a more humanistic approach developed in nursing and, as a result, nurses' education and quality of care has developed considerably. The difference can be seen particularly after World War II, when Bowlby, Spitz, and Robertson's studies on orphans living in institutions like hospitals and nurseries had a revolutionary impact on practitioners throughout the world. These studies caused children's psychological needs to be highlighted for the first time and the term 'separation anxiety' was defined in relation to the experiences of children

(4-7). Formerly, even the mothers of children being treated in hospitals were not allowed to visit them, a measure used in order to prevent infection. Between 1940 and 1970, however, many hospitals around the world changed their care policies and began allowing mothers to visit their sick children freely (8-10), a decision which considerably changed the view of nurses towards children in hospitals. As a result of these studies, a more “family centered approach” was adopted in the field of nursing which included support for the family's participation in care and giving care according to the family's needs (11,12). In the 1960s, mother and child health services began to develop and after the 1970s nurses shifted from a therapeutic approach to the holistic approach, a specialization that sees the child as a whole person with biological, cognitive, emotional, and social needs and with past life experiences, a family, and a specific environment (3,13,14). Today, pediatric nurses have gained a great deal of autonomy as a result of the development of child advocacy roles and a family-centered care philosophy based on techniques of communication with children, holistic health care, acknowledging the family's continuity and importance in caring for the child, and seeing families as a part of the health care team (15-17).

A fondness for children is a cultural phenomenon which reflects the value given to children (17). Being parallel to the developments in the world, Kağıtçıbaşı's studies determined that the value given to children has changed significantly during recent years and that psychological aspects such as "the liking of children" became stronger than children's economic aspect in our country (18,19). Nevertheless, Yurdakök claims in his 2007 article that children are mostly lost as a result of preventable health problems and states his idea as follows: "I think we do not like children because if we did they would not be in this position" (20).

Although there are not any studies directly addressing the liking of children in terms of nurses, pediatric nurses can be understood better from the view of children and their families. The studies on hospitalized children's expectations from nurses show that preschool and school children (3-12 years of age) expect nurses to wear colorful clothes, be warm and affectionate, and play games with them in addition to providing care (21). Meanwhile, adolescents with chronic illnesses (12-18 years of age) expect empathy, genuineness, compassion, honesty, and help for developing positive relations (22). Families, on the other hand, expect the nursing staff to be communicative, sincere, knowledgeable, and to like children (23-25).

There are no studies on nurses' liking of children in our country, despite the fact that they are the people most frequently in contact with children while providing care and services to them. Therefore, with this study taken as a pioneering effort, we have aimed to determine pediatric nurses' liking of children, the characteristics of their working lives, and their attitudes toward activities related to children.

### Research questions

This study had been carried out to determine pediatric nurses' liking of children and the factors affecting this. Questions examined in this study are as follows:

1. Are there any differences in the liking of children scale scores of pediatric nurses on the basis of their socio-demographic characteristics?

2. Are there any differences in the liking of children scale scores of pediatric nurses on the basis of characteristics of their working lives?
3. Are there any differences in the liking of children scale scores of pediatric nurses on the basis of their performance of activities related to children?

## Material and methods

### Sampling

The universe and the sample of the study is composed of 242 pediatric nurses working in the departments and polyclinics of two children's hospitals under the Ministry of Health and one children's hospital in the university. During the period in which the study took place, 15 nurses were not included due to maternity leave, 18 of them chose not to take part in the study, and 2 of them in the university hospital were on sick leave. As a result, the study included 207 nurses. The rate of participation to the study is 85%. In all 3 hospitals, nurses work for 8 hours in rotation; in neonatal intensive care units there is 1 nurse for every 1-6 children while in emergency units where patient flow is frequent, there is 1 nurse for every 100-250 children.

### Instruments

1. Demographic data: Information was gathered by researchers using a 20 item survey they prepared. The survey comprised questions focusing on socio-demographic data including nurses' age, level of education, marital status, and the number and gender of their own children; data on their professional lives including the place of work, duty, duration of employment (in months), the frequency with which they changed workplaces, the number of children cared daily, voluntary work in an institution, and whether or not they had thought of quitting their current job; and data related to their performance of activities related to children including reading children's books, knowing children's games, and following news related to children.
2. The Barnett Liking of Children Scale (BLOCS): This scale is a measurement tool that had been developed to assess people's attitudes towards

children using 14 items of a 7-point Likert-type scale (26). A reliability and validity study of the scale for use in Turkey was carried out by Duyan and Gelbal in 2008 (27). The scale yields scores that range between 14 and 98 points. The items have 7 points where people are asked to provide their opinion on a statement, with possible answers ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." In terms of the content of the test items, 4 of the items that aim to determine the liking of children have negative meanings (#3, #6, #1, and #13) and the rest of them have positive meanings. While scoring the positive items, 7 points are given to "strongly agree" and 1 point is given to "strongly disagree." While scoring the negative items, 7 points are given to "strongly disagree" and 1 point is given to "strongly agree." The higher the score, the more the subject likes children; the lower the score, the lower the subject's level of liking of children (27).

### Procedures

Prior to the study written permission was obtained from the hospitals. Nurses were informed that the study was being carried out in order to determine their approach towards children and were assured that the data would be used for scientific purposes only, that their answers were to be kept confidential, and that they should not give their names. The data was gathered via face to face meetings with nurses and the administration of each survey took an average of 10 min.

### Data analysis

Parametric and nonparametric statistical techniques were used according to the structure of the variables used to answer the questions of the study and features of the data. The score taken from the liking of children scale is a continuous variable and it is taken as the dependent variable of the study. The distribution of the dependent variable in the universe is accepted to be normal. The independent variables of the study are composed of nurses' socio-economic characteristics in addition to their characteristics related to work and participation in activities related to children. The arithmetic averages of nurses' scores from the liking of children scale have been compared according to these characteristics. In the comparison, when 2 independent variables were

present t-tests were used while in the cases where the number of categories was greater than 2 F-tests were used. When significant results were reached in F-tests, LSD tests were incorporated for paired comparisons. The correlation coefficient between some independent variables accepted as continuous (such as the number of children) and scores from the liking of children scale were examined and the significance of this coefficient was tested. Since the data derived from these variables are at the ordinal level, the nonparametric Spearman rank correlation coefficient technique was utilized. Evaluation of the data was carried out via SPSS 11.5.

### Findings

The socio-demographic data gathered from the nurses are given with the average scores of the liking of children in Tables 1, 2, and 3 in order to avoid repetition. Nurses got a high mean of score of  $82.07 \pm 16.35$  from the scale. Nurses' levels of liking of children according to their socio-demographic characteristics are given in Table 1. When regarded by characteristic, 38.7% of the nurses were graduates from health vocational schools and 33.2% of the nurses were between 26 and 30 years of age, with the average age being  $31.76 \pm 6.25$ . In terms of their personal lives, 67.3% of them were married and 81.7% of these married nurses had children. When the liking of children was examined according to the variables, differences among nurses' scores and their education level, age, and parental status were not found to be statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). There was, however, a statistically significant difference between nurses' scores and their marital status ( $P < 0.05$ ). When examined, it was found that the difference originated from nurses who had been divorced, with the average score for this group being  $67.38 \pm 28.53$ .

Nurses' liking of children according to characteristics related to their working lives is given in Table 2. When Table 2 was examined, it was found that 77.9% of the nurses were working in the hospitals under the Ministry of Health and most of them (95.7%) were working as service nurses. In terms of duration, 26.6% of them were determined to have been working for 6-10 years and the average length of total employment in the field was found to be  $136.28 \pm 86.52$  months (an average of 11.3 years).

Table 1. Pediatric nurses' liking of children according to their socio-demographic characteristics.

Socio-demographic characteristics	S	%	$\bar{X}$	SS	Statistic
<b>Level of Education</b>					<b>F = 1.346</b>
Vocational School	77	38.7	81.68	17.68	
Two-year degree	55	27.6	79.67	16.39	
Higher Education	67	33.7	84.48	14.53	
<b>Age</b>					<b>F = 0.504</b>
21-25	28	14.1	80.71	16.16	
26-30	66	33.2	83.09	14.69	
31-35	63	31.7	83.21	16.75	
36-40	25	12.6	78.40	20.64	
41+	17	8.5	81.47	15.15	
<b>Marital Status</b>					<b>F = 3.461*</b>
Married	134	67.3	82.57	15.70	
Single	57	28.6	82.95	15.02	
Divorced	8	4.0	67.38	28.53	
<b>Having Children (n = 142)</b>					<b>t = 0.583</b>
Yes	116	81.7	82.10	16.24	
No	26	18.3	79.96	19.77	

\*P &lt; 0.05

The number of children that nurses provide care for daily changes from 3 to 250 according to the clinic in which they work, giving our study an average of  $15.63 \pm 29.87$  children per day for each nurse. Throughout their employment, 39.2% of the nurses had never changed their place of work. It was found that 49.2% did not want to change their current workplace while 50.8% of them wanted to leave their job due to overworking, exhaustion, and a lack of administrative support. While examining nurses' liking of children according to their characteristics related to work, no statistically significant difference was found between scores and the institution in which they worked, their period of service, or their desire to change their place of employment ( $P > 0.05$ ). Differences between nurses' liking of children

scores and frequency in their changing of workplace and the number of children cared for daily, however, were found to be statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). Examinations showed that the difference originated from the nurses who had changed their work place once and who provided services to 6-10 children per day.

When we examined the extent to which pediatric nurses engaged in activities related to children (Table 3), it was determined that 54.8% of them had read at least one children's book, 67.3% of them followed news related to children, and 81.9% of them know children's games, with the average number games known found to be  $3.32 \pm 1.88$ . Most of the nurses (94.0%) did not work voluntarily in any institutions or organizations providing services to children. It

Table 2. Pediatric nurses' liking of children according to their characteristics related to their work lives.

Characteristics related to work life	S	%	$\bar{X}$	SS	Statistic
<b>Institution</b>					<b>t = -1.649</b>
Ministry of Health hospitals pediatric clinic	155	77.9	81.05	17.79	
University hospital pediatric clinic	44	22.1	85.64	8.97	
<b>Period of service (Year)</b>					<b>F = 0.431</b>
1-5	51	25.6	82.92	14.51	
6-10	53	26.6	82.60	15.16	
11-15	44	22.1	79.59	21.21	
16+	51	25.6	82.78	14.64	
<b>Frequency in change of work place</b>					<b>F = 3.701*</b>
No change	78	39.2	83.49	13.39	
1	51	25.6	86.47	12.24	
2	41	20.6	78.24	19.62	
3 +	29	14.6	75.90	21.84	
<b>Number of children served per day</b>					<b>F = 2.956*</b>
1-5	60	30.2	84.12	13.71	
6-10	70	35.2	78.04	19.24	
11-15	26	13.1	88.00	8.32	
<b>Desire to change workplace</b>					<b>t = -1.776</b>
Do not want to leave	98	49.2	84.14	14.38	

\* P &lt; 0.05

was found that the differences between the liking of children scores and the nurses' reading of children's books and performing volunteer work related to children were not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). The difference between the scores and the nurses' following of news related to children and knowledge of children's games, however, were found to be statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ).

## Discussion

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every human being under the age of 18 should be accepted as child and, as a signatory country, Turkey is obliged to accept the criterion regarding the age of children (28). Social attitudes towards children have shown a considerable change

Table 3. Nurses' liking of the children according to their participation in activities related to children.

Participation in activities related to children	S	%	$\bar{X}$	SS	Statistic
<b>Reading children's books</b>					<b>t = 0.347</b>
Yes	109	54.8	82.43	16.81	
No	90	45.2	81.62	15.84	
<b>Following news related to children</b>					<b>t = 2.006*</b>
Yes	134	67.3	83.67	15.37	
No	65	32.7	78.75	17.87	
<b>Knowing children's games</b>					<b>t = 5.084**</b>
Yes	163	81.9	84.67	14.07	
No	36	18.1	70.25	20.49	
<b>Volunteer work</b>					<b>t = 1.484</b>
Yes	12	6.0	88.83	8.58	
No	187	94.0	81.63	16.64	

\*P &lt; 0.05 \*\*P &lt; 0.001

over the centuries. Pollock, in her book "Forgotten Children" (29), mentions the studies of Ariès and states that ancient Romans and Greeks did not hold children in particularly high regard. This attitude continued into the Middle Ages, when artists did not consider children worthy of being included in paintings of the period and social standards dictated that children were considered adults around the age of seven, when they were able to take care of themselves. According to Ariès, children were seen as a source of amusement for adults and, although socially positive attitudes toward children were on the rise, they were not recognized as individuals. Boys were seen as duplicates of their fathers while girls were duplicates of their mothers. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century on, there was a gradual realization that children were different from adults and they were not simply miniature versions of their parents. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, children came to be seen as something more than "little adults" who were weak, fragile, and in need of education to correct their behavior. Children's physical health was a matter of concern (29). In 1997, Tan's article declared that children's emancipation from a state of invisibility and inaudibility had been made possible by P. Ariès' pioneering studies and it had been discovered as a cultural category in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (30).

But in Tan's article, in accordance with Pollock's socio-biological theory, the liking of children seems to have always existed everywhere (30). When looking at the liking of children in our own culture, Onur concluded that Turkish society has always liked children (31). According to Barnett and Sinisi, attitudes towards children reflect people's basic beliefs about children and being together with them (26). In this study, pediatric nurses' average scores in the assessment of the liking of children were found to be very high ( $82.07 \pm 16.35$ ). This finding can be a result of the fact that the nurses, being members of Turkish society, have inherited some social cultural beliefs related to the liking of the children. However, it could also be interpreted that they are working as pediatric nurses because they like children and they consider spending time with children to be valuable. It was determined that pediatric nurses' liking of children scores had statistically significant relations to their marital status, frequency in changing of workplace, the number of children they cared for daily, their interest in following news related to children, and knowledge of children's games ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Tables 1-3). It was determined that divorced nurses have lower liking of children scores compared to single and married nurses. Although this finding does not

mean that divorced nurses do not like children, it can be interpreted to mean that after divorce, their emotions towards children can be effected. In a wide-ranging meta analysis, it is stated that there are lower positive relations among parents and children of divorced families (32) while in other studies it is indicated that parents cannot show sufficient interest in their children due to their own problems and that their relationship with their children might weaken after experiencing a divorce (33,34).

Another finding of this study is that frequency in change of workplace affects the liking of children. It is found that nurses who changed their workplace once have higher liking of children scores and the difference was statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Table 2). This finding might indicate that nurses like children and do not want any change of workplace due to the job satisfaction they get from working with them. It can also be said that the low liking of children scores of nurses with more than 3 changes of workplace (shown in Table 2) support this theory. A review of the literature reveals that nurses are the health personnel with most circulation, a fact which causes a low level of job satisfaction and motivation (35-37). In another study focusing on nurses' change of workplaces, payment, and job satisfaction, it was found that job satisfaction and organizational adjustment are strongly and directly related whereas there might be a direct or indirect correlation (either positive or negative) between payment satisfaction and having a degree, having children, working 12 h shifts, and the changing of workplace (36).

The study also indicates that nurses working in services where 6-10 children are provided with care show significant differences with regard to their liking of children scores when compared to the scores of those nurses providing care to fewer or greater numbers of children. This finding may result from the specific nature of the workplace. When we examine the type of medical care provided by nurses who attend to 6-10 children per day, it is revealed that these services are mostly in the pediatric intensive care, pediatric oncology, and pediatric surgery departments. In the intensive care units, there are patients with fatal diseases, poisoning, trauma, and post-operational complications limiting the chances of survival; in oncology units there are patients

suffering from life-threatening cases of cancer; in surgical units, there are patients with severe surgical problems (acute abdominal pain, foreign body aspirations, etc.). In all of these units, priority of service is given to the maintenance of vital functions (respiration, circulation, body temperature, control of the metabolism, etc.) rather than focusing on the basic causes of the diseases (38,39). In all of the various intensive care units, the main focus of the nurses is based on sustaining vital functions and treating the patients (38,39). Therefore, the sensitivity of nurses working in these services decreases with regard to patients' social and emotional needs and physiological aspects become prominent.

Another finding of the study is related to nurses' interest in following news about children. It was found that 67.3% of the nurses follow news about children (Table 3). The difference between nurses' liking of children scores and their interest in following news about children was determined to be statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, it was shown that nurses who follow news related to children have a very high average of liking of children scores ( $83.67 \pm 15.37$ ). This finding can be interpreted as being a result of the nurses' high social sensitivity. When an examination is done on the kinds of news stories that these nurses followed, a noticeable trend emerges, indicating that they primarily follow news about child abuse and neglect (news about missing children, pick pocketing children, children abandoned after incidents of violence, children beaten and killed by their parents, etc.) followed by news about proper nutrition for children and child psychology. A study by Bilir et al. covering 16 provinces of Turkey during which they looked into the frequency of physical punishment given to children determined that 62.6% of children between the ages of 4 and 12 are exposed to physical punishment (40). The Prime Ministry's Institution of Family Research's 1998 study about domestic and social violence determined that 1 out of 3 families in Turkey have domestic violence and 3 out of 4 children witness domestic violence (41). As health care professionals, nurses play an important role in helping to prevent child abuse and neglect, and in providing education and consultancy for individuals, families, and society (1-4,15,16,42). Therefore, it is an important finding that nurses follow this news.



Nurses' knowledge of children's games was also examined in this study. It was determined that 81.9% of the nurses know children's games. The nurses who knew children's games had high average scores of liking of children ( $84.67 \pm 14.07$ ) (Table 3). In the analysis, it was found that the difference between knowing children's games and the liking of children is significant to the highest degree ( $P < 0.001$ ). Games are seen as very important "tasks" in children's lives (43). In Şener's article, as Huizinga states, playing games is more than a physiological and psychological phenomenon; it is also an important factor in cultural development as these games are often handed down from generation to generation (44). Playing games is also defined as a fundamental right in the 31<sup>st</sup> Article of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (28). In the hospital context, games have a particularly important role in helping children cope with their anxiety and fears (45). In recent years, hospitals have increasingly begun to use games as psychological first aid towards children. Games are seen as facilitators in the hospital experience because children manage to feel more in control their lives and their anxiety is reduced during games in which they create situations similar to their daily lives (45). Nurses are expected to use games therapeutically for children in hospitals. Games and toys can be utilized in gathering vital information about children, administering their medicines, and preparing them for diagnostic procedures in addition to the emotional benefit of enabling them to explain their feelings about their disease, ensuring the child's adaptation (1-3). A study on the expectations that children in hospitals have from nurses show that preschool and school children (3-12 years of age) expect nurses to wear colorful clothes, be warm and affectionate, and play games with them as well as providing care (21). The nurses who consider games to be important activities for hospitalized children are shown to be especially important in this study.

## Conclusion and suggestions

It has been determined that the level of liking of children among pediatric nurses is high overall and that this is affected by their marital status, their frequency in changing workplace, the number of children cared daily, their knowledge of children's games, and their interest in following news related to children. This can be a result of the fact that nurses with less than one change of workplace have always worked in the same setting and that they scored highly in terms of the liking of children and having a positive attitude towards being with children. The fact that nurses who like children follow news about children and are interested in children's games is important in terms of their being health care personnel with social sensitivity which should be supported. The low liking of children scores of nurses working in pediatric surgery and intensive care units where acute patients are getting treatment can be considered as a result of their focus on physical problems, causing less focus on the children's emotional aspects. It may be suggested that nurses working in such services should be provided in-service training aimed at changing their attitude in order to make sure that they perceive every child as a person, independent from the reason of his arrival in hospital and with emotional needs that require attention. Another finding is that divorced nurses have lower liking of children scores. This might indicate that there is a disruption in their relationship with children due to their own problems being parents themselves. Nursing services managers should consider providing necessary help to the personnel having this problem. In administrative terms, the application of the liking of children scale as an evaluation tool for nurses who are going to work in children's services can be suggested. Data derived from this study is limited to the sample and might not be generalized. There is a need for more wide-ranging studies.

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