

Introduction to Intramuscular Injections (Focus on Empathy) Instructor Resource

READ the following:

Belonephobia (fear of injections) is a disorder that affects 3.5% to 10% of the population. The median age of onset is 5.5 years. Adults may have panic or anxiety attacks. Children may have similar symptoms in addition to crying, tantrums, agitation and clinging to a parent.

Many persons with belonephobia may also react to injections with a vasovagal reflex response. This response may include paleness, sweating, nausea, shortness of breath, loss of bladder and bowel control and various levels of unresponsiveness (light-headedness or fainting). The onset of the vasovagal response may be 2 to 3 seconds following the needle-stick or up to several hours later.

REFLECT on the situation

How would you know if your patient has a fear of needles?

First ask your patient prior to the procedure. During the procedure make sure you are looking for symptoms of anxiety or vasovagal response.

What could you do if your patient admits to a fear of needles?

Check to see if the medication could be given via a different route. If it cannot, then make sure you discuss the procedure in detail to alleviate fear of the unknown and have patient ask questions. Encourage the patient to participate in the decision making and ask about ways to relieve anxiety. They may want a particular person (parent, friend) or distraction during the procedure. Gradually expose the patient to unopened supplies and observe their response. Numbing medication may be used if the fear is of pain.

SHARE your thoughts with a peer