

# JAPANESE PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL PLAY

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## ABSTRACT

Japanese parents' beliefs about medical play, one form of therapeutic play in healthcare settings, were examined. Mothers of 2- to 5-year-old children were recruited and asked to answer yes-no and open-ended questions about two medical play scenarios as well as questions regarding normative play among young children. Qualitative content analysis was used in analyzing the data collected from 26 mothers.

The results revealed that most mothers thought normative play was helpful for young children's learning and development. It was common for parents to believe medical play is not helpful because it reminds children of negative feelings such as pain and fear related to immunization. Cultural implications regarding mothers' answers and the limitations of the study are discussed.