

Child Patient Topic At Hospital Meeting

Children, facing a stay in the hospital should be told frankly that their experience will be no picnic but will include some unpleasant moments, the Association of Western Hospitals convention here was told yesterday.

The advice came from a series of speakers at a panel discussion on "The Child Goes to the Hospital." The speakers were a hospital director, a nurse, a doctor, a medical social worker and a mother.

All agreed that hospitals and medical workers could well give more attention to preparing children for unfamiliar hospital surroundings which can upset their emotions and retard recovery.

Frank warnings that unpleasantness lies ahead are better

than false promises that everything will be pleasant, since unreal reassurances are worse than no reassurance, Dr. Luigi Luzzatti, Stanford University Hospital professor of pediatrics, told the audience.

In the orientation effort for young patients, nurses play the most prominent part, doctors are next important and social workers have the smallest role, Doctor Luzzatti said.

The mother's role was raised by Mrs. Harland Frederick, of Oakland, chairman of the hospital committee of the East Bay Council of Co-Operative Nursery Schools.

Nurses and hospitals generally seem to resent the presence of parents of children in hospitals, she complained.

The answer, so far as the nurses are concerned, may be in their own maternal instincts, Mark Berke, director of Mt. Zion Hospital, replied.

"The antagonism or rivalry between mothers and nurses is the result of a war to see which one acts as the mother," he said.

The presence of parents, so long as they do not interfere in treatment, is no handicap, Doctor Luzzatti said. Nurses at Mt. Zion find mothers a "real help" in caring for child patients, Berke added.

Visiting hours for children range from none at some hospitals to nearly unrestricted hours, Dr. Luzzatti reported.

At Mt. Zion, where parents may see their children from 10 a. m. to 8 p. m., nurses have found mothers not nearly as insistent in demanding to see their children as where hours are shorter.