

# Family Presence in Adult Resuscitation: Is it Best Practice?

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## Introduction

Family presence is the attendance of family members to a situation where they can see the patient being resuscitated (eg. during CPR).

There is strong support amongst nurses for family presence during paediatric resuscitation

## Clinical Issue

Does family presence in adult resuscitation have the same benefits?  
A literature review of the topic found two common themes:

- Evidence supporting family presence
- Perceived barriers

## Benefits

Family members who attended a resuscitation of a loved one felt:

- It was their right to be present
- They could see health professionals had done everything possible to save the life of their loved one
- The grieving process was easier
- Appreciative of the last chance to say goodbye
- Their presence benefited patient in their last moments
- They were helpful to the process by providing medical information
- Made them realise how serious the situation was

## Conclusion

There are many benefits associated with family presence during a resuscitation. Health professionals however, have concerns which need to be addressed before inviting family into the resuscitation

## Barriers

Health professionals fear:

- The situation will be too distressing for family especially due to sanitised TV programmes giving a false idea
- The family will interfere with treatments
- There is a lack of support for family
- It personalises the situation: Health professionals cannot emotionally distance themselves
- Legal action
- Lack of physical room
- Conflict between colleagues who don't approve of family presence



## References

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