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Description of Nursing Care Demands in Inpatient Paediatrics in Switzerland (DEGREE): A Pilot and Feasibility Study

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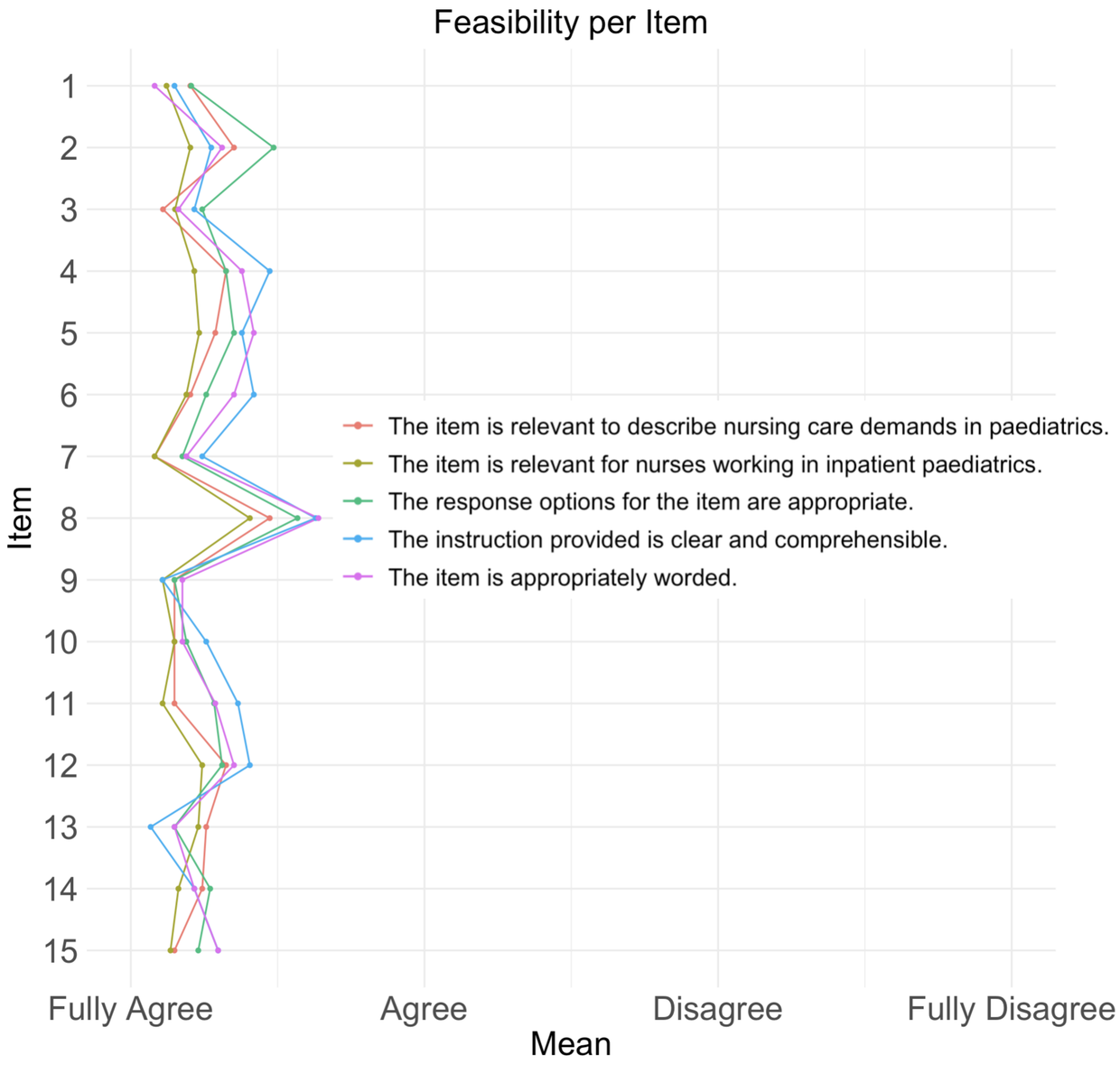
Background

Paediatric nursing means caring for a **clinically and developmentally diverse** population of children from 0-18 years[1,2,3]. Inadequate staffing is linked to job dissatisfaction[4] and missed care[4,5,6] leading to medication errors, higher costs, and increased readmissions[3,6,7]. Adequate staffing levels are required to meet the demand. However, general paediatric-specific acuity and dependency **assessment instruments are rarely used** and developed by using expert opinion and Delphi approaches. We aimed to **explore the feasibility of the newly developed DEGREE instrument**.

The DEGREE Assessment Instrument

Informed by **mapping process** of existing instruments and **expert discussions**, it consists of **15 patient-based** variables with **two or three answer options**. Differentiating between **fixed** (e.g. age, developmental state) and **time varying items** (e.g. pain, agitation, diagnostics/ procedures).



Methods

Pilot and feasibility testing (May to July 2025) in **16 paediatric wards of 6 university and cantonal hospitals** in the **German- and French-speaking** part of Switzerland. Feasibility was tested by asking for **relevance**, **comprehensiveness** and **comprehensibility**. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics.

Feasibility per Item

- High agreement across all items
- Item 8 (Agitation) received the lowest rating
- Highest ratings were given to Item 1 (Age), Item 7 (Parental Participation in Care) and Item 9 (Pain)

"I definitely find it much better than the current one and it is very well adapted to the care of children. It would make it much easier to plan and allocate nursing staff to patients." (Feedback of one participant)

Nurses' demographics (n = 74)

10.32 (± 9.97) years clinical experience

50.0% (n = 37) University Hospital

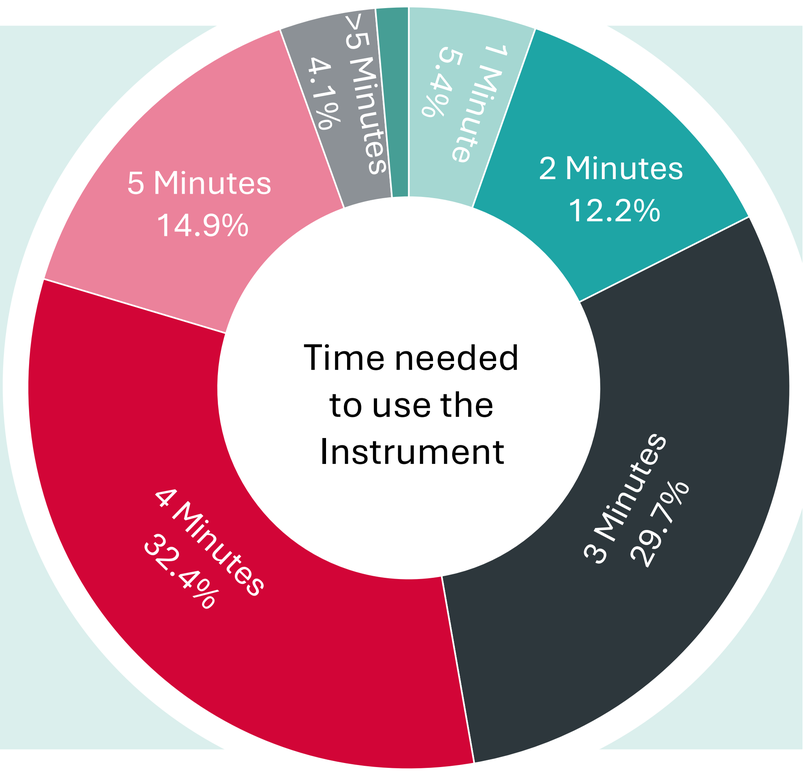
87.8% (n = 65) German-speaking part of Switzerland

Overall Feasibility (n = 74)

28.8% (n = 21) stated missing items, e.g. organisational tasks, chronic pain management, preparation of medication

68.9% (n = 51) willing to use in daily practice

89.2% (n = 66) time needed is acceptable



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References: