Aim
To develop a guided imagery program as part of an overall medical management strategy for children with chronic abdominal pain. The guided imagery program will help children better manage their pain and improve their quality of life.

Introduction & Background
Painful functional gastrointestinal disorders and chronic abdominal pain affect a large number of children, interfering with daily life on several levels. Medical management has been limited and often does not provide children an effective way to manage their pain. However, behaviour strategies have been shown to have a positive impact on pain. Specifically, guided imagery and progressive relaxation can safely and effectively reduce chronic abdominal pain, improve social functioning and school attendance.

Method
Program Design:
• Three week series, groups meet once per week
• 40 minute sessions
• Groups are divided by age
• 2-4 techniques are taught at each session
• Post evaluation for children and families

Techniques Taught:
• Deep Breathing
• Breathing in Color
• Pac Man Gobbling the Pain
• Beach Imagery
• Tree Roots Taking the Pain
• Child-Specified Guided Imagery
• Using warm showers to ease the pain

Findings
A chart review was conducted on 78 children who received guided imagery between 2006 – 2008. Quantitative results are as follows:
• 71% did not need follow-up visits
• 91% did not need additional diagnostic testing

Conclusions & Implications for Practice
Guided imagery is an effective intervention for children with functional abdominal pain. After completing a three part series of guided imagery, the quality of life improves for patients with functional abdominal pain.

Additional Information
