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Improving THA (total hip arthroscopy) Patient Satisfaction Scores by Reducing Time Spent in the PACU from 90 Minutes to 60 Minutes

By Jenny Stultz

BACKGROUND, SIGNIFICANCE & PURPOSE

Total Hip Arthroplasty (THA) reduces pain and improves range of motion in patients with end stage osteoarthritis. Patients whose post-THA outcome matches their pre-surgical expectations report higher patient satisfaction scores. Post-surgical pain is expected, but if patients don't ambulate soon enough after surgery, the pain escalates. Simply put, early ambulation improves patient satisfaction scores. To promote early ambulation, spinal block and Propofol are favored over general anesthesia to reduce time spent in the PACU (post anesthesia care unit). The current PACU goal for THA patient discharge is within ninety minutes of PACU arrival. Sometimes the spinal block wears off sooner than ninety minutes creating a window of opportunity for pain to escalate before the patient can ambulate. Increased pain may require intravenous (IV) analgesic intervention which is taxed with an additional twenty-minute PACU stay for re-evaluation. To close this window, the target PACU discharge time for THA patients should be reduced to sixty-minutes. The purpose of this study is to determine if the intervention of reducing PACU discharge time from ninety to sixty minutes boosts patient satisfaction scores.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

Although length of stay varies in the literature referenced for this study, the benefits of a 60-minute PACU discharge time are line with findings that support the benefits of early ambulation in THA patients. Benefits such as reduced pain and optimized function are influenced by PACU efficiency in transferring the patient to the orthopedic floor.

PROPOSED PROJECT

PACU nurses of post THA patients will document post-THA PACU discharge as either less than or greater than sixty minutes on a specialized form.

EVALUATION

The THA committee will analyze the data and determine if THA patients who discharged from the PACU within sixty minutes reported higher patient satisfaction scores than those who did not.