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Enhanced recovery after surgery: Methods to decrease opioid use postoperatively

Statement of the Problem: Patients nationwide are becoming aware of the dangers of opioid medications. Those patients facing surgery are increasingly concerned about how to best manage post-operative pain while minimizing the risk of opioid addiction. Anesthesiologists at a variety of centers have developed new anesthetic approaches to deal with these concerns. The approach has yielded two significant benefits: firstly, a decrease in the overall amount of narcotics needed during and after surgery and secondly it's a decrease in the overall length of stay in the hospital for surgical patients admitted to the hospital postoperatively. This innovative approach has been implemented at several medical centers including at the University of Missouri with great success and has led to improvements in surgical outcomes, pain control and reduced length of stay. Keys to the success include pre-operative patient education and expectations, use of multi-modal pain management techniques, careful fluid management intra-operatively, and early postoperative ambulation. Communication between nursing, anesthesia and surgery teams is essential in successfully implementing an enhanced recovery after surgery program. The need to shift from current and established patterns of care require that all providers are educated and agree to treat patients in a new and different paradigm in dealing with surgical pain. The use of enhanced recovery techniques have initially been limited to a few surgical types and are now spreading rapidly to all areas of surgery. The lessons learned in the operating room will likely spread to other medical specialties and a transformation in the treatment of pain is needed to reduce the dependence mainly on opioids by health care providers.

Biography

Quinn L Johnson has a specific interest in outpatient, regional and orthopedic anesthesiology. As Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology at the University of Missouri. He works closely in the education and training of both medical students and residents in anesthesiology. He has lectured and published on a variety of anesthesia topics including regional anesthesia, sedation guidelines, airway evaluation, and the post-op pain management for patients using chronic opioids. He is active in the American Society of Anesthesiology and currently serves as President of the Missouri Society of Anesthesiology. Current research projects include post-operative delirium in the geriatric patient and implementation of the enhanced recovery after surgery in multiple specialties at the University of Missouri.

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