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Enhanced Recovery Pathways: Why It Matters

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Enhanced Recovery Pathways (ERP)

- Bundling of evidence based care elements across the *entire* surgical episode
- Goal of ERP programs
 - Minimize the physiologic derangement induced by anesthesia and surgery
 - Accelerate the patient's physiologic recovery so they meet all discharge criteria
 - Maintain patient safety, surgical quality metrics and minimizing readmissions



Is ERP More Than Just Best Practices?

- Health care delivery is a complex system
 - Multiple transitions of care
 - Multiple providers
 - Multiple sequence dependent processes
 - Delays or disruptions in sequence steps interfere with the timely completion of the process
- Improving the output of any complex system requires control of as many system elements as possible



System Improvement I

- The primary goal of any system improvement project is to **REDUCE VARIATION** in the process



System Improvement II

- Health care systems are not just PROCESSES
- There are numerous people involved
- System improvement requires that the personnel involved in the process
 - Share a mental model of the entire process
 - Actions are coordinated to achieve a consistent outcome



Enhanced Recovery Programs

- Success is not just the result of a “bunch” of best practices put on a list
- Success results from the merger of
 - Best practices to minimize physiologic disruption to the surgical patient
 - Aligning all stakeholder’s mental models and actions
 - Patients and families
 - Surgeon
 - Nursing professionals
 - Pharmacy professionals
 - Implementing and monitoring a system that ensures that all (nearly) elements are done every time for every patient



What ERP Programs Do

- Literature across multiple surgical specialties
 - Demonstrate increased compliance with evidence based best practices
 - Decrease in numerous hospital acquired conditions
 - VTE
 - Pulmonary complications
 - UTIs
 - Improvement in certain aspects of patient experience
 - No increase in post-operative complications or readmissions
 - *Decreased length of hospital stay*



Is Length of Stay Reduction Important?

- Highly efficient and effective systems optimize:
 - People, Information, Materials, and **Time**
 - Eliminating all waste improves performance and reduces total cost
- In a hospital, LOS is one of the best surrogates of financial performance
 - ERP for esophagectomy (Br J Surg 2013;100:1326)
 - LOS reduced by 2 days
 - Overall cost saving per patient €2013
- In DRG based (ie Medicare) or bundled payment schemes LOS becomes a critical determinant of institutional financial success



Summary

- ERP programs are a holistic approach to the care of the surgical patient
 - Designed across the episode of care
 - Designed to minimize the physiologic stress of surgery
 - Designed to include “best” practices for:
 - Surgical outcomes
 - Patient safety
 - Resource utilization
- Success requires broad staff engagement, monitoring of element compliance, and constant feedback of performance
- ERP programs clinically benefit the patient and are associated with decreased LOS which directly translates into improved institutional financial performance

