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Improving Spinal Fusion Surgical Outcomes, Patient Expectations, and Patient Satisfaction: A Quality Improvement Project

Abstract

Background/Local Problem: Inadequate education, patient engagement, and unrealistic surgical outcomes among neurosurgical spinal fusion patients can cause decreased patient satisfaction and reduced surgical benefit. Addressing modifiable risk factors, increasing patient engagement and patient satisfaction through the development of realistic surgical goals, and increasing patient education can decrease preventable spinal fusion comorbidities and poor surgical outcomes.

Purpose: This quality improvement project aimed to increase patient engagement and satisfaction and reduce modifiable risk factors through improved patient education and the creation of realistic surgical goals.

Methods: The Theory of Self Care was the theory driving the project. Patient related phone calls and pre and post intervention patient surveys were collected.

Intervention: The project occurred over five and a half months. A surgical goal question prompt was created and a patient education packet was created and mailed to patients. Pre and post intervention surveys were distributed to patients to determine intervention effectiveness. Education related patient phone calls were tracked. Excel was used for data analysis.

Results: There was unanimous patient satisfaction with the project interventions indicating improved patient satisfaction and engagement. Phone calls decreased during the intervention which might indicate improved patient education leading to reduced questions.

Conclusion: Project results suggest that the interventions were effective at meeting the project goals. The interventions were well received by patients and there was informal unanimous support from staff.

The project was cost effective and sustainable. Future recommendations include a formal program evaluation and replication of the project with a larger patient population.

Keywords: Healthcare improvement spinal fusion; Spinal fusion surgery; Patient engagement; Patient expectations; Preoperative education.