Patient Expectations of Joint Replacement Surgery and Post-Operative Health Status

Abstract:

Aim: To examine the relationship between pre-operative expectations of hip and knee replacement surgery and post-operative health status.

Method: Pre-surgery OA hip and knee replacement patients completed HSS Hip Replacement or Knee Replacement Expectations questionnaires, WOMAC Index and SF-36. WOMAC Index and SF-36 were also completed 3 months post-surgery.

Results: 25 primary total hip replacement patients (58% female, mean age 67 years, 64% had surgery at a private hospital) completed questionnaires. 88% of hip respondents rated the improvement in the ability to walk as very important. Improvement in daytime pain was very important for 84% and 80% reported an improvement in ability to stand or perform daily activities or climb stairs as very important. No gender differences or differences between public and private patients were seen in number of expectations. A higher number of pre-operative expectations was significantly correlated with post-operative pain and function – people with more expectations had worse pain and function at 3 months post-surgery. Specific expectations did not predict post-operative pain or function.

68 primary or bilateral total knee replacement patients (47% female, mean age 70 years, 84% had surgery at a private hospital) completed questionnaires. Improvement in the ability to walk was rated as very important by 91% of respondents and 88% rated the relief of pain as very important. The number of pre-op expectations was not correlated with either pre-operative or post-operative health status and specific expectations did not predict post-operative pain or function. No gender differences or differences between public and private patients were seen in number of expectations or importance of expectations.

Conclusion: Patients have high expectations of surgery. While specific expectations did not predict outcome at 3 months post-surgery, a higher number of expectations was associated with poorer outcome for hip patients. Recognising the broad range of expectations patients have may be helpful in the preparation for surgery and its recovery.