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Three Steps on the Pathway to Improving Outcomes Following Lower Limb Arthroplasty

Abstract:
The Mater Hospital performs up to 1600 lower limb arthroplasties per year, making it one of the largest joint replacement centres in Australia. The authors are reporting on the 2006 redesigned program using three intuitive steps to improve patient care and outcomes.

The first step was to listen to our patients and staff in relation to their needs towards improving quality of care. The second was to explore the literature and visit other centres to determine best practice. Finally, we examined in detail our own practice and implemented changes that would be appropriate to the private sector environment within our patient referral base.

There were also three distinct areas for practice change and rejuvenation. These were:
1. Preoperative assessment and screening
2. Preoperative and acute care
3. Rehabilitation.

The three practice areas are now a continuum of care with predictable progression for patients and staff. The first year of operation has demonstrated significant (p<0.01) reduction of hospitalisation, 99% patient satisfaction and a new funding model. Functional health outcomes have been similar to the previous system of care.