

Day Care Surgery and the Elderly

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Abstract

Day care Surgery is a new set up with good outcome based on cost, care, complications, safety and after care facilities particularly suitable for elderly subjects.

Introduction

The beginning of the 20th century has seen a revolution in the field of surgical specialty encompassing all the specialties under one canopy that of minimal invasive laparoscopic surgery. A much older concept of surgery, again, involving most of the surgical branches, is Ambulatory or Day Care Surgery.¹ The benefits of both these modalities of surgical treatment have proved their validity and stood the test of time, resulting in tremendous advantages to the patient population.

The combination of laparoscopy and Day Surgery far exceeds or supercedes any reservations we may have. However, anaesthesia forms the main stay of Day Care surgery, especially for laparoscopic Day Surgery.

Pre-anaesthetic preparation with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and sedative anxiolytic administered the day before the procedure helps in the intra-operative, as well as, the post-operative recovery. In recent years, development of better anaesthetic agents have given rise to newer terminologies like 'sedo-analgesia'.² The availability of ultra short acting anaesthetic agents, have boosted post-procedure recovery making Day Care surgery

acceptable.

The common criterias for day care surgery has been detailed in 'The protocols of a day care centre', a booklet offering insight into the setting up and running a day care surgery centre, helpful in increasing efficiency of patient management,³ children, young and old, alike.

Indications

Patients are admitted in the morning with prior investigations and check-up; kept under observation after surgery in well equipped, well attended recovery room and discharged in the evening. Patients are either followed up with a revisit according to instruction or even by a home visit from a doctor attached to the Day care centre.

Usually following types of patients are suitable for day surgery:

General surgery: Hernia repair, Piles ex., Cyst / Lump excision, Appendectomy, Liver and lymphnode biopsy, etc.

Gynaecology: Diagnostic Lap., Tubal ligation, DNC, Biopsy, Small fibroid ex., etc.

Urology: Kidney biopsy, renal cyst, varicocele ligation, Cystoscopy, etc.

Complications

Complications are minimal, mostly, anaesthesia related, requiring overnight observation. Surgical complications are rare and become less over a period of time.

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Elderly Day Care Surgery

Surgical problems are not uncommon in the elderly subjects. However, Mumbai is a cosmopolitan city having all types of patients, rich, middle class and poor, belonging to different castes and creed including people from outside India. However, there are big hospitals mostly private, beyond the reach of middle class and poor. Unless big surgery, like Bypass, transplant, etc is involved, Day Care is a boon for the surgical procedures mentioned above for

- 2) Simplified procedure of admission and discharge.
- 3) Least costly.
- 4) Safety in terms of complications.
- 5) Constant care as well as post care, either at the centre or at home.
- 6) Special care for elderly subjects.

After treatment

Post operative follow up and treatment can be done by quantum healing, as well as by other alternative system⁴ depending on individual choice, cost effectiveness and easy access which is very essential for elderly people.

Socio-economical aspect

India is a vast country, its population in 2001 stood at 1.03 billion. According to estimates made by the technical group on population projections, the likely number of the elderly by the year 2016, will be around 113 million, many suffering from multiple disorders, nearly one third of them living below poverty line.⁵ As such availability of Day Care surgery is a great help for majority of old people as it will be cost effective and less liable to develop hospital sickness.⁶ In the elderly, physical, mental and social status are

clubbed together. His physical illness will affect his social and economical well being.

However, economical implications of day surgery are tremendous, a study on the socio-economical aspect of day surgery in a public hospital, in India, was an eye opener as to the implications of savings to the government exchequer.⁷ It has been shown that the cost of major day surgical procedure to be one third of the cost of admitted patients. It has been reported that application of laparoscopic cholecystectomy in an extensive study in India, has indicated, along with various observations, favourable economic solution.⁸

Safety profile

Safety measures of day surgery have been reported.¹ Well organized day surgery is safe with minimum or no complications particularly suitable for elderly population because of after care facilities and proper follow up.

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