

Enhanced Recovery After Surgery: The Role of the Pathway Coordinator

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Introduction: Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) pathways challenges traditional surgical care. While ERAS programs are associated with improved outcomes and cost, implementation and sustainability are recognized challenges. Since 2008, the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) introduced ERAS elements to guide perioperative care in 12 pathways aiming to increase patient's participation in their care. The purpose of this presentation is to describe the role, tasks and responsibilities of the ERAS nurse coordinator to guide senior management and nurses in leadership positions who wish to begin a new program or expand an existing program. Key factors that facilitated the implementation and sustainability of this organizational change at the MUHC are presented. The author will share insights learned from her experience, raise awareness of the nurse coordinator's key role and positively recognize her institution for supporting her role and for their outstanding collaboration. It summarizes how the leadership style, the organizational culture and the type of change facilitated the implementation.

Methods: Growing evidence suggests using a theoretical framework or model to bring change in an organization increases the likelihood of success. The theoretical Framework based on Innovation of Diffusion Model and the Plan Do Study Act cycle guided our implementation plan. This ensured a balance between the need to provide protocol guidance using standard order sets and nursing plans with the need for efficiency and ease-of-use by the clinician.

Results: Our various publications show a decrease in hospital length of stay, without increasing complications or readmission rates. As the first North American ERAS Society Center of Excellence, the MUHC assists other institutions to implement the ERAS care system. The MUHC ERAS program is listed in Accreditation Canada's Leading Practices Database.

Conclusion: As more and more hospitals apply lessons learned from the enhanced recovery experience in colorectal surgery to other surgical procedures, there will be an increased need for a nurse coordinator to lead this organizational change. ERAS helps to develop a culture focused on patient recovery and actively integrate patient's participation in care. An organization wishing to start an ERAS program should set goals, report on the results, invest time to build the care pathways and provide strong leadership.