

Impact of preoperative education on patient empowerment and surgical experience in a colorectal eras program

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Background

Managing expectations of patients undergoing complex surgical procedures can be challenging. Although preoperative education has been shown to improve satisfaction and outcomes in small case series, no literature exists demonstrating the role of education on patient empowerment or experience/satisfaction in an ERAS protocol.

Methods

Patients undergoing non-emergent colorectal surgery were asked to participate in this study. A convenience-based sample of 1yr was used to survey patients completing a preoperative optimization class (as part of a broader ERAS program) and case-matched controls: that is, patients that were having similar procedures but not in an ERAS protocol. The optimization class included education about multiple aspects of the pre/intra/post-operative period, and focused on appropriate expectation management, especially as it pertained to pain control. The survey (Table 1) assessed patient preparation, education, and empowerment, and was graded on a 100mm VAS. Results of individual questions were compared using unpaired t-test.

Results

329 patients completed the survey. (250 ERAS, 79 non-ERAS). Although our goal was to recruit 250 patients in each group, recruiting non-ERAS patients became difficult due to increased activity of our ERAS team. Table 1 lists mean VAS responses for each question, and p-values reveal significant differences for each question. Furthermore, individual responses were more variable for the non-ERAS patients and correlated less closely around mean/median values for each question (not shown below due to space constraints).

Conclusions

Our results suggest that participation in a preoperative optimization class can improve feelings of preparedness for surgery, resulting in improved patient empowerment. Appropriate expectation management can lead to improved patient-centered care.

Table 1:

Question	Prehabilitation Class Participant (Mean)	Non-Prehabilitation Participant (Mean)	P-Value
I feel I was adequately prepared for my colorectal surgery	91.4	80.5	0.001
I feel I can actively participate in my own recovery	91.2	82.3	0.001
I feel my expectations for surgery were adequately met	90.6	82.3	0.005
I feel encouraged and enabled about my recovery	93.7	81.4	0.003
I feel I was physically/mentally prepared for my surgery	88.3	81.0	<0.001
I feel I was involved in the decision making about my surgical care	89.9	81.2	0.007
I understood the health information provided to me about my surgery	91.3	82.3	<0.001
I feel I had the access to the information I needed about my surgery	91.0	81.8	<0.001
I feel prepared to care for my own health after my surgery	89.1	81.1	0.001