

ERAS for Hip Surgery – The Role of Optimal Pain Relief

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Enhanced Recovery After Surgery is an evidence-based, protocol-driven multidisciplinary care process with the ultimate goal of improving clinical outcomes and cost savings.

These care processes are not new as we previously may have applied them in the “fast-tracking” of surgical patients. With emphases on fasting time, minimally invasive surgical approaches, fluid balance, optimal pain management and early mobilization, the ERAS protocols have proved to shorten hospital stays and reduce complications. Initially applied in colorectal surgery, it is now widely adapted in other forms of surgeries.

However, in hip surgery, optimal pain management is the stumbling block for faster recovery. Multimodal regimen that involves paracetamol, anti-inflammatories as well as opioids may be inadequate. Epidurals with superior analgesic effect, may result in motor weakness and delayed ambulation. Nerve blocks require expertise and for complete pain coverage, may require injections in both the lumbar and sacral plexus.

Despite these challenges, implementing the ERAS process in hip surgeries will improve clinical outcomes and save costs. Meticulous auditing before and after implementation of the ERAS process will provide affirmation of the efficacy of these protocols.