

European Benchmarking For Quality Improvement In Postoperative Pain Management - A Pilot Project

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Introduction

Benchmarking has been described as a tool for quality improvement in postoperative pain management (1), however there are no such initiatives in the UK. Like in other areas (e.g. comparison of education systems – PISA), international rather than national benchmarking could strengthen quality improvement also in this field.

Aim of Investigation

We piloted the use of the German benchmark tool, QUIPS (quality improvement in postoperative pain), in a busy London teaching hospital. It was our aim to investigate the feasibility of an international expansion of the project.

Methods

The validated German patient questionnaire was translated into English. It included pain scores on mobilisation, maximal/ minimal postoperative pain scores, impact of pain on functional parameters, and patient satisfaction. Between 6th January and 10th April, we asked 48 patients from 2 wards to fill in the questionnaire on their first postoperative day. We collected data on surgery, anaesthesia and analgesia.

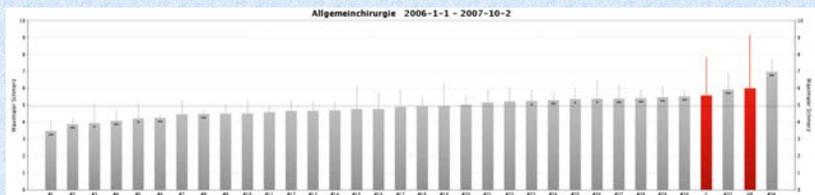


Abb. 1: Pain intensity: QUIPS- ITEM Maximal postoperative pain score



Abb. 2: Patient satisfaction: Patients wishing more pain killers

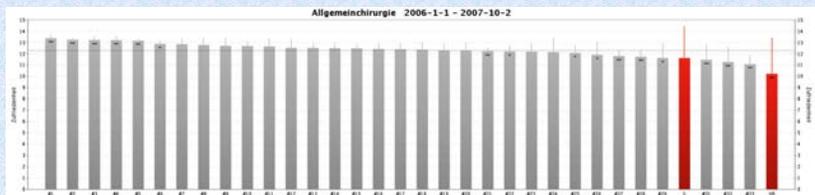


Abb. 3: Patient satisfaction: Satisfaction with the postoperative pain management



Results

We received questionnaires from 30 patients (62%). Data input and feedback procedures of the QUIPS website worked without any problems. Refusal to participate (23%) was more frequent than in the German hospitals. Linguistic difficulties (9%) appear more often due to a large proportion of patients with immigration background. First results indicate room for improvement in some outcome parameters of acute pain management, e.g. the proportion of patients wishing more pain killers (43%) was significantly higher the average (15%).

Conclusion

The German benchmark tool showed its feasibility for European usage. We highlight specific concerns in the London hospital e.g. exclusion of Non – English speakers. This is the first step into a European centres in future.

1) Meissner et al. Benchmarking as a tool of continuous quality improvement in postoperative pain management. Eur J Anaesthesiol. 2006 Feb; 23 (2): 142-8.