

JOINT SCHOOL

Royston Hospital

Quality Project

The National Orthopaedic Enhanced Recovery after Surgery (ERAS) Quality Improvement Collaborative took place between November 2013 and March 2015. Eighteen District Health Boards (DHB) across New Zealand took part and implemented ERAS principles for people having elective hip and knee replacements (arthroplasties). The results supported the evidence that patients who received care guided by ERAS principles have better clinical outcomes and better care experiences. The average length of stay fell and, more patients received comprehensive pre-operative education and discharge planning.

At Royston Hospital support was given to implement our own Joint School using similar principles and format to the DHB. A multi-disciplinary team comprising Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy take a group of patients who are scheduled for hip and knee surgery through their hospital journey, and to prepare for their discharge on the third post-operative day. This includes practical elements such as crutch use and equipment demonstration.

Our first project team meeting comprising nurses, Occupational Therapist (OT) and Physiotherapist (PT) and Administration staff met on 7th November 2018, and our first class took place on 23rd July 2019.

On average 80% of patients having arthroplasties at Royston attend the class. The length of stay has been reduced. Patient feedback both verbally and via our online survey is rewardingly positive.

Our key objectives were:

- Reduce average length of stay
- Reduce admission time
- Early identification, assessment and care planning for patients with increased needs
- Positive patient feedback in relation to the meeting of their individual needs and expectation
- Positive feedback from our surgeons
- To be cost neutral, and at no cost to the patient

Prior to Joint School the average length of stay was 3.35 days. Patients who attend Joint School now have an average length of stay of 3 days.

We have created a safe group environment to expose patients and their family / whanau to information from clinical specialists. Opportunity is provided for them to ask questions. Patients are provided with a comprehensive booklet which consolidates what is taught in class.

Joint School successes and outcomes have been shared with our team to ensure that staff continue to support the patient to achieve their aims in the post-operative period.

We have developed a robust process to invite all patients to Joint School approximately two weeks prior to surgery at no cost to the patient. The Surgeons Consulting Rooms explain and promote the service.

Joint School allows clinical staff to assess patients and identify those who may require additional support during their stay – physically, psychologically and socially.

Discharge planning begins at Joint School, and we have installed information boards in each room so that the patients are reminded of their daily goals.



Feedback

When asked about the standard of delivery of the information, 70% of respondents described it as "excellent" and 30% described it as "above average". When asked about the content of the presentations all patients rated it as "interesting and relevant".

We continue to receive positive verbal feedback about Joint School from patients during their admission and via our patient satisfaction survey, which they receive 10 days after discharge.

Both Occupational and Physical therapists report that patients are engaging with them about their progress and needs, and using crutches safely and much quicker due to practicing at home. This has resulted in a reduced time commitment from them.

Surgeons are delighted with the impact that Joint School has had on their patients progress. One surgeon attributed the information provided at Joint School as making his patients more relaxed and knowledgeable about pain management.

Conclusion

The class is fully implemented into the routine of the hospital, and embedded into the nursing rosters and work schedules of the therapists.

The class has enabled staff development and we have increased the group of nurses who enjoy running the class and have become more confident in presenting to large groups. Attendance at Joint School is a compulsory element of our staff orientation programme for new nurses.

Booklets are now professionally printed. Due to growing class volumes we identified the need and capacity to add one more class per month during the peak times.