

Telling the Whole Truth to Patients Before Hip Fracture Repair Surgery: Cross Sectional Study

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Abstract:

Background: Hip fracture repair surgery is associated with a certain mortality risk. However, there is evidence that orthopedic surgeons tend to refrain from discussing this issue with their patients prior to surgery.

Aim: To examine whether orthopedic surgeons raise the issue of one-year post-surgery mortality before hip fracture repair surgery. Moreover, this study examined factors related to the decision whether to inform patients of the mortality risk one-year post-surgery.

Method: The study is a cross sectional study, where validated digital questionnaires were administered to 150 orthopedic surgeons.

Results: A minority of the orthopedic surgeons reported that they always inform the patients of the risk of mortality in the year following a hip fracture surgery. The wish to avoid frightening the patient, lack of time, and the concern of causing patients to lose hope were found to be the most prevalent causes of not informing patients of the one-year risk of mortality after hip fracture repair surgery. Orthopedic surgeons reported a medium-high level of perceived self-efficacy. Higher self-efficacy was found to reduce the likelihood that the orthopedic surgeon would inform the patient of the one-year mortality risk after hip fracture surgery. Moreover, older age and being an expert were found to increase the likelihood that the surgeon would inform the patient of the one-year mortality risk after hip fracture surgery.

Conclusions: It seems that orthopedic surgeons tend to refrain from revealing to their patients the issue of mortality following hip fracture repair surgery, conduct that appears to be affected by personal, professional, and organizational factors. It is necessary to raise the awareness of orthopedic surgeons regarding this tendency. As part of their studies, medical students should be given tools for dealing with these barriers.