

Surgeon Perceptions of the Integration of Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMS) Into Clinical Practice

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Background:

Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) are standardized, validated instruments used to measure the patient's perception of their own health status including their symptoms, functional well-being, and mental health. Although PROMs were initially developed as research tools, their use in clinical practice for shared decision making and to assess the impact of disease and treatment on quality of life of individual patients has been increasing. There is a paucity of research exploring providers' perspectives on the clinical integration of PROMs. We sought to use qualitative methodology to understand surgeons' perceptions of integrating PROMs into their clinical practices.

Methods:

Semi-structured interviews were performed from November 2019 till August of 2020. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thematic saturation was achieved after interviewing nine surgeons representing eight surgical specialties. Qualitative interview data was thematically analyzed using an inductive approach facilitated by Atlas.ti qualitative software.

Results:

47 unique codes were identified that fit into 24 themes that revealed five novel insights. Key insights included: 1) PROM data can be transform surgical practice on an individual and institution level, 2) Surgeons view PROMs as the next stage of advancing patient-centered care, 3) Implementation of PROMs into clinical practice requires a strong leadership team to guide the integration process, 4) Surgeons appreciate the challenges in integrating PROMs into surgical practice including risks of incorrect use or interpretation, 5) A PROM platform must be adaptable - to the diversity within surgery and to unique physician workflows.

Conclusions:

Surgeons demonstrated that they see the value in integrating PROMs into routine care in order to better inform patient's during pre-operative discussions and to help identify at risk patients in the post-operative period. However, they also identified numerous barriers to the implementation of an integrated system for the routine use of PROMs in clinical practice and expressed concern about using PROMs to compare operative outcomes between surgeons. Based on this work, institutions that want to incorporate PROMs into surgical practice need to have a strong leadership team to support the integration and utilize a PRO platform that gives individual surgeons and surgical teams the ability to customize platforms for their unique practices.