
Gender as Parameter when Planning Quality Improvement in Clinical Pathways



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Different preferences based on gender, influence the patient's perspective of good quality in care and treatment.

As future healthcare points towards more outpatient treatment and less hospitalisation, and as the majority of quality-studies are related to patients who are hospitalised or have chronic diseases, it seems interesting to explore the patient perspective on good quality in ambulatory surgery.

In the day surgery unit at North Zealand Hospital in Denmark, we made a small quantitative study on 66 patients in April 2016. The purpose was to uncover if the parameters weighted for good quality in treatment and care during hospitalisation can be transferred to outpatient treatment.

Except for the obvious, that the patients expected a good result of their surgery without complications, we found variations related to the patient's gender and in relation to studies conducted on patients during hospitalisation.

Most of the patients expressed the importance of the professionals knowing their personal medical history and plan.

They found it less important to have a private room after the surgery compared to studies including hospitalised patients. Some patients even expressed that they felt comfort in having some fellow patients in the recovery room.

Some expressed satisfaction in having the postoperative information several times as they could hear the information given to other patients.

It seemed important to the experience of quality and to reduce anxiety prior to the operation, that the patients had visited the unit and was informed by both surgeon, anaesthetist and nurse regarding the plan for the day of surgery.

As an unexpected finding, we saw significant differences related to the patient's gender. The female patients expressed as important to the experience of good quality, to be prepared for the operation, both in writing and by dialogue with professionals, about what to expect after the discharge and during the first days of recovery, Additionally, the female patients expressed more than the male, importance of possibility to be accompanied by a relative on the day of surgery.

The male patients expressed more than the female, importance of being able to influence the time schedule of the surgery in consideration to their everyday life and work.

Unlike the female patients, the males expressed preference to be in a calm environment prior to the operation, listening to music or given possibility to read without interference from relatives or other patients.

In planning future clinical pathways with the patient at the centre, it seems important to the experience of good quality that it is possible to differentiate the pathway related to gender, and personal preferences, and that the physical surroundings in waiting areas leaves room for both the need to be private and to those who prefers social support to dampen anxiety prior to surgery.

Zoom On

What is your top management tip?

Openness and curiosity

What are your personal interests outside of work?

Family and friends, Literature, Sculpture, Nature

Your favourite quote?

If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea. – Antoine de Saint- Exupery

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