

The New Standard in Total Joint Arthroplasty: Multimodal Analgesia and Small Opioid Prescriptions

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INTRODUCTION: The purpose of this study is to assess the current analgesia and anesthesia practices used by total joint arthroplasty (TJA) surgeon members of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (AAHKS) as well as identify changes in practice made by AAHKS members over time.

METHODS: A survey of 37 questions was created and approved by the AAHKS Research Committee. The survey was distributed to all practicing adult reconstruction surgeon members of AAHKS in May 2023. Results were compared to a nearly identical survey sent out to all board-certified adult reconstruction surgeon members of AAHKS five years previously in November 2018.

RESULTS: There were 527 responses (16%) to the survey. Since 2018, the mean number of opioid pills prescribed after TJA has declined significantly from 49 to 38 pills after total knee arthroplasty (TKA) and from 44 to 24 pills after total hip arthroplasty (THA). The use of multimodal analgesics in addition to opioids has also increased over the past five years from 74% to 93%. The most common medications utilized include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (98%), acetaminophen (80%), and gabapentinoids (32%). A majority of surgeons (78%) still use a spinal for total knee arthroplasty and total hip arthroplasty. However, there has been an increase in the number of surgeons using peripheral nerve blocks for TKA from 69% in 2018 to 84% in 2023. The routine use of periarticular injection or local infiltration anesthesia in THA and TKA has also increased over the past 5 years from 80% to 86%.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: Since 2018, there has been increased adoption of multimodal analgesia and anesthesia and improved consensus regarding the optimal regimen among surveyed board-certified arthroplasty surgeon members of AAHKS. Importantly, the number of opioid pills prescribed after THA and TKA has declined significantly over the past 5 years.