

Spouses of Total Hip and Knee Arthroplasty Patients See Improvements in Quality of Life

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INTRODUCTION:

Hip and knee arthritis is debilitating for patients but the decreased activity level and independence may also affect spouses. Spouses of individuals who have undergone THA or TKA often assume caregiving roles during the post-operative rehabilitation period but may benefit in the long term from increased patient activity levels. However, little research has been done to specifically examine the perspectives and quality of life changes of spouses of patients who have undergone these procedures.

METHODS:

This was a retrospective cohort study where we surveyed spouses of patients who underwent primary THA or TKA at a single urban tertiary care academic medical center. Spouses were asked various Likert-style questions. 100 total spouses (50 hips and 50 knees) were surveyed. Means were compared using ANOVA analyses. Average follow-up time was 2 years.

RESULTS:

When asked to rate their own quality of life, the THA group spouses had a mean of 4.1 (SD=0.9) and the TKA group had a mean of 4 (SD=1) where 1=significantly worse and 5=significantly better. When spouses were asked to rate their own opinion of the patient's improvement of their quality of life, the means were 4.7 (SD=0.7) and 4.3 (SD=1.2) for the THA and TKA groups, respectively. Spousal assistance of daily activities also decreased over time. Means for the THA group were 2.6, 2.7, and 1.4 ($p<0.00001$) where 1=never and 5=always at pre-operative, 1-2 weeks post-operative, and at least 1-year post-operative timepoints, respectively. Means for the TKA group were 2, 3.7, and 1.8 ($p<0.00001$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Spouses of patients undergoing THA and TKA see a significant improvement in their own quality of life. Further, they report providing less assistance to the patient in daily activities at least 1-year post-operatively. These results show that THA and TKA improves the lives of not only the patients, but also their caregivers.