

Are THA and TKA Patients in the United States Getting Sicker? Outcomes from a Multi-Center Registry

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INTRODUCTION: The Outpatient Arthroplasty Risk Assessment (OARA) Score, consisting of 54 patient comorbidities, was developed to medically risk stratify patients for safe same day discharge after total joint arthroplasty (TJA). With the TEAM mandate starting in 2026, understanding the temporal trends in data for which reimbursements will be based on is paramount. This national multi-center database study evaluated temporal trends in the OARA Score, same-day discharge, 90-day readmission rates, and complications following primary TJA.

METHODS:

Across 40 locations, 11,471 primary unilateral TJAs (4,132 hips, 7,339 knees) were performed from 2018 to 2023 were identified. The registry outcome data were temporally compared by the year of surgery. P -values ≤ 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

RESULTS: The median OARA Score was 15 for years 2018 to 2021, which significantly increased to a median of 30 and 35 for years 2022 and 2023, respectively ($P \leq 0.001$). Similarly, 90-day readmissions and complications were steady from 2018 to 2021 (ranges, 3.0-4.1% and 3.4-5.8%, respectively) with significant increases for years 2022 and 2023 (ranges, 8.3-13.1% and 11.0-15.1%, $P < 0.001$). In addition, the proportion of patients discharged on the same-day of surgery steadily and significantly increased over the study period from 18.1% in 2018 to 50.4% in 2023 ($P < 0.001$). Interestingly, patients NOT discharged on the same-day of surgery were 1.6x (95% CI, 1.2-2.2) more likely to have a readmission and 1.5x (95% CI, 1.2-2.0) more likely to have a complication regardless of the year of surgery.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: Study results showed a significant increase in the presence of comorbidities via the OARA Score suggesting TJA patients are sicker compared to previous years. Despite an overall upward trend in both readmissions and complications for the years 2022 and 2023, these sicker patients are more frequently discharged the same-day of surgery with about half the incidence of readmission or complication.