

The First 24 Hours: Early Patient Challenges After Same-Day Discharge Total Hip Arthroplasty

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INTRODUCTION: Same-day discharge (SDD) total hip arthroplasty (THA) has gained popularity, offering potential benefits in terms of cost, recovery time, and patient satisfaction. While SDD THA has demonstrated comparable safety and outcomes to inpatient procedures, there is limited literature focusing on the patient experience during the critical first 24 hours post-discharge. This study aims to explore the self-reported challenges encountered by patients in the immediate postoperative period following same-day discharge.

METHODS: A survey was administered to a consecutive sample of 315 same-day discharge THA patients at a single high-volume institution between September 2024 and January 2025. The survey asked patients to identify the most significant challenge or concern encountered within the first 24 hours after discharge. Open-ended responses were categorized by two independent reviewers. Where appropriate and when subcategories were clearly identifiable, further breakdown of responses was performed. Any discrepancies in categorization were resolved by a third independent reviewer.

RESULTS: Analysis of the 301 valid responses revealed ten broad categories of challenges or concerns. The most reported challenges in the first 24 hours post-surgery were pain (28.9%) and mobility issues (28.9%). Further subcategorization revealed a large proportion of the mobility issues cited specifically reference challenges to maneuvering in bed (13.0% of all responses). Other notable concerns included medical symptoms (9.0%), medication management (7.6%), and sleep disturbances (7.6%). A notable portion of patients (10.3%) reported no challenges.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: This study identifies the most common challenges faced by patients after same-day discharge following THA, with pain, mobility, and medical symptoms being the most frequently reported issues. These findings highlight the importance of tailored preoperative education and postoperative support to address these early recovery difficulties and improve patient outcomes in outpatient THA settings.