

## Higher Patient Satisfaction Linked to Higher Quality Hospital Surgical Outcomes

Recently health care funding has shifted to a focus on Value-Based Purchasing in an effort to spend more efficiently by focusing spending on high quality care. To support this effort, financial incentives have been tied to a range of quality measures, including patient satisfaction. Prior to this study there was no clear evidence that patient satisfaction was definitely an indicator of high quality medical outcomes. Now, a study from the Journal of American Medical Association-Surgery has demonstrated that, in fact, hospitals rated highest by patients did produce better patient health and fewer problems.

This nation-wide study, based on data from over 100,000 inpatient surgery patients aged 65 and over during a four year period, in the highest and lowest quartiles of patient satisfaction scores. Hospitals from the top quarter had mean patient satisfaction scores of 76.7%, while those in the lowest quarter had a mean of 58.7%, showing a considerable difference consumer ratings. In those top patient-rated hospitals, researchers found considerably lower likelihoods of numerous negative outcomes thirty days after surgery. Specifically, the hospital with top patient satisfaction scores produced 11.1% less relative risk of mortality and an 11.5% reduced risk of minor complications. The same trend was deserved for major complications and hospital readmissions though the results were not statistically significant.

***Editorial:*** *These results are particularly noteworthy for both patients and policy makers. This study provides clear, broad evidence that patient satisfaction surveys are useful in reflecting high quality hospital care when used in conjunction with medical outcome measures. This supports the value of more extensive consumer-based satisfaction surveys to help improve care. Additionally, these results provide strong evidence to support the usefulness of recent Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services financial incentives that include patient satisfaction as a core component of Value-Based Purchasing. It appears that basing hospital-funding reimbursement partially upon patient satisfaction is a route to higher quality, lower cost healthcare spending.*

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### Bibliography

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doi:10.1001/jamasurg.2015.1108