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Specialized, high volume ambulatory surgery centers improve patient outcomes, study says

Ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) that specialize and have high case volumes have better patient outcomes, according to a study by researchers at four U.S. universities.

The researchers found that the more a facility specialized in its services –and the higher its case volume for those services, the higher its patient quality scores. The researchers defined quality performance as the likelihood that an ASC patient undergoing surgery would avoid unplanned hospitalization within 30 days after the procedure.

Patrick A. Malone
Patrick Malone & Associates, P.C.
1331 H Street N.W.
Suite 902
Washington, DC 20005

pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com
www.patrickmalonelaw.com
202-742-1500
202-742-1515 (fax)

To perform the study, which examined potential associations among ASCs organizational strategy, structure and quality performance, the researchers obtained claims data for arthroscopy and colonoscopy procedures performed from 1997 to 2004. “Quality performance” was determined by the likelihood that an ASC patient undergoing surgery would avoid unplanned hospitalization within 30 days after the procedure.

Ambulatory surgery, or outpatient surgery, is provided for patients requiring less than a 24-hour stay. ASCs have become more common across the country because (a) advances in surgical technology and anesthesia have made surgery easier on patients and so consequently more in demand; and (b) the cost of providing the same procedure in an ASC is often considerably less than hospital outpatient surgery.

According to a KNG study, the specialties with the highest percentage of Medicare-certified ASCs in 2007 were ophthalmology (19%) and gastroenterology (18%), followed by pain management (8%), orthopedics (7%) and dermatology (4%). Multiple specialty ASCs comprised 35% of the total.

Source: [Medical Care Research and Review](#)

You can view the KNG study [here](#).

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