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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A Comparative Analysis of Patient Recovery and Complication Rates through Enhanced Surgical and Anesthetic Approaches in Orthopedic and General Surgery

ABDUL KALEEM[1], ABDUL SAMI MIRANI[2], ANEETA KUMARI[3], KHADIJA[4], EHSAN ULLAH MALIK[5], MUHAMMAD KHURRAM ZIA[6]
[1]*Anesthesia Specialist, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Institute of Trauma (SMBBIT) Larkana, Pakistan.*
[2]*Assistant Professor of Surgery, Ghulam Muhammad Mahar Medical College (GMMMC) Sukkur, Pakistan.*
[3]*Assistant Professor of Surgery, Isra Hospital Hyderabad Pakistan.*
[4]*Consultant General Surgery, Department of Surgery Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), Karachi, Pakistan*
[5]*Assistant Professor of Surgery, Chandika Medical College Larkana, Pakistan.*
[6]*Associate Professor of Surgery, Liaquat College of Medicine and Dentistry, Darul Sehat Hospital ' Karachi, Pakistan.*
Corresponding Author: Abdul Sami Mirani, Email: sami_mirani@yahoo.com, Cell: +923309454991

ABSTRACT

Aims and Objectives: This study aimed to compare perioperative outcomes, complication rates, and cost-effectiveness between enhanced and conventional surgical and anesthetic techniques in orthopedic and general surgery. The objective was to evaluate postoperative recovery, pain management, complications, and healthcare costs to optimize surgical care.

Methodology: A comparative study was conducted at tertiary care hospitals in Sindh, Pakistan, following STROBE guidelines. Patients undergoing orthopedic and general surgery were categorized into four groups based on conventional or enhanced surgical and anesthetic techniques. Data on demographics, surgical parameters, anesthesia type, recovery metrics, and complications were collected through medical record reviews and standardized postoperative assessments at 1, 7, 30, and 90 days. Statistical analysis included multivariable logistic regression, t-tests, and chi-square tests, with significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: Enhanced techniques significantly reduced surgical duration (orthopedic: 112 ± 25 to 98 ± 20 min; general: 130 ± 30 to 110 ± 22 min) and intraoperative blood loss (orthopedic: 410 ± 85 to 290 ± 70 mL; general: 520 ± 95 to 310 ± 75 mL). Hospital stay decreased (orthopedic: 6.8 ± 1.2 to 4.5 ± 0.8 days; general: 7.4 ± 1.5 to 5.2 ± 1.0 days), with lower 30-day readmission rates and improved pain management. Opioid consumption and major complications, including surgical site infections and thromboembolic events, were significantly reduced.

Conclusion: Enhanced surgical and anesthetic techniques improve recovery, reduce complications, and lower healthcare costs. Findings support the broader implementation of robotic-assisted surgery and multimodal anesthesia to enhance perioperative care and surgical outcomes.

Keywords: Comparative study, enhanced surgical techniques, multimodal anesthesia, perioperative outcomes, robotic-assisted surgery, complication rates.

INTRODUCTION

The dramatic changes in perioperative care have been attributed to surgical innovation and anesthetic advancements that have reduced morbidity and improved patient outcomes. Traditional surgical techniques and anesthetic protocols have served their purpose well, but the advent of minimally invasive procedures, multimodal analgesia, and precision anesthesia have changed the way patients recover [1]. Orthopedic and general surgeries, which account for a large fraction of the global surgical burden, have experienced a paradigm shift in perioperative management. Nevertheless, the comparative influence of these improved techniques on postoperative recovery and functional results, as well as complication rates, has not been thoroughly investigated. In orthopedic surgery, computer-assisted navigation, robotic-assisted procedures, and enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS) protocols appear to have the potential to decrease surgical trauma, decrease blood loss, and accelerate functional rehabilitation [2].

Likewise, in general surgery, laparoscopic and robotic-assisted interventions have been adopted and have been associated with better clinical outcomes with lower complication rates than open surgery[3]. At the same time, anesthetic methods have shifted from traditional general anesthesia toward goal-directed, regional, and multimodal anesthesia. While these advances have increased hemodynamic stability and decreased postoperative pain, more work is needed to understand the comparative effectiveness of these modern surgical and anesthetic techniques in different specialties. Studies have addressed improved methods in either orthopedic or general surgery but have failed to compare the impact of the method on patient recovery, rates of complications, and healthcare resource utilization. To determine whether some innovations in one field could be translated and thus provide an opportunity for interdisciplinary optimization of perioperative care, a nuanced assessment is required[4].

The purpose of this study was to evaluate and compare the patient recovery trajectories and complication rates between enhanced surgical and anesthetic approaches in orthopedic and general surgery. This research will evaluate perioperative strategies based on evidence of the analysis of key outcome measures such as postoperative pain, functional recovery, infection rates, thromboembolic events, and length of hospital stay[5]. Understanding the surgical innovations and anesthetic refinements interplay could potentially inform clinical guidelines, improve surgical safety, and contribute to the creation of precision medicine in surgery. The findings given here have the potential to inform policy frameworks and improve patient-centered surgical care in the face of the global burden of surgical morbidity[6].

This comparative analysis of the findings has important implications for global surgical practices, and in particular, for resource-poor environments where minimizing perioperative care standing can dramatically reduce healthcare burdens. High-income countries have implemented sophisticated surgical and anesthetic techniques extensively[7]. However, disparities persist in low to middle-income regions because of infrastructural inadequacies and access barriers. This study could provide a way forward to scalable, cost-effective interventions to improve surgical outcomes universally by identifying the most effective strategies to boost patient recovery and minimize complications. In addition, the differential impact of these techniques in orthopedic and general surgery may help develop targeted perioperative protocols to reduce postoperative morbidity and mortality. With emerging surgical sciences, we must incorporate data-driven approaches into clinical practice to complement patient safety and resource allocation and to propel the next frontier of precision surgery[8, 9].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: It is a comparative study conducted at tertiary care hospitals of Sindh, Pakistan, in orthopedic and general surgery departments from January 2021 till January 2023. The study

follows the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) guidelines and has been approved by each participating center's Institutional Review Board (IRB). All patients were informed consent before enrollment.

The evaluation of multiple parameters is done in this study to compare the enhanced surgical as well as anesthetic approaches in orthopedic and general surgery. Demographic and clinical parameters include patient age, sex, BMI, comorbidities like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, ASA classification, preoperative hemoglobin and albumin levels, and baseline functional status judged by Karnofsky Performance and Charlson Comorbidity Index. Surgical parameters are type of surgery (conventional (open, standard laparoscopic, traditional fixation), enhanced (robotic-assisted, computer navigated, minimally invasive techniques), surgical duration, blood loss, intraoperative fluid balance, need for blood transfusion, surgical site infections). Anesthetic parameters and postoperative nausea and vomiting (PONV), opioid-sparing analgesia, and anesthesia-related complications such as hypotension, respiratory depression, and intraoperative awareness are compared between general anesthesia (GA), total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA) and regional techniques (spinal, epidural, nerve blocks). The parameters of intraoperative and postoperative recovery include the time to first mobilization, return of bowel function, tolerance to oral feeding, need for admission to the Intensive Care Unit, hospital length of stay, 30-day readmission and reoperation rates, and hospital and 30-day and 90-day mortality.

The parameters analyzed postoperatively using the Visual Analog Scale (VAS) at different times, opioid consumption in morphine milligram equivalents (MME), functional recovery scores, time to resumption of daily activities, and incidence of major complications such as deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, myocardial infarction, stroke, surgical site infection, sepsis, etc. Healthcare resource utilization parameters are hospitalization costs, operating room time, use of robotic or computer-assisted technologies, postoperative rehabilitation costs, and the overall cost-effectiveness of conventional versus enhanced approaches. The primary objective was to compare postoperative recovery and complication rates among surgical and anesthetic strategies, and the secondary objectives are pain control, functional recovery, length of stay, health care costs, and 30- to 90-day complication profiles to optimize perioperative care strategies and improve surgical outcomes across disciplines.

Ethical Considerations: This study was conducted by the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of participating hospitals, with informed consent obtained from all patients.

Group formation: The patients were divided into four distinct groups based on their perioperative management strategies.

1. Orthopedic Surgery Conventional Approach (OS-CA): Traditional surgical and anesthetic methods.
2. Orthopedic Surgery – Enhanced Approach (OS-EA): Advanced surgical techniques (e.g., robotic-assisted or computer-navigated procedures) and modern anesthesia strategies (e.g., multimodal analgesia, regional blocks).
3. General Surgery – Conventional Approach (GS-CA): Open or conventional laparoscopic techniques with standard anesthesia.
4. GS-EA: Minimally invasive, robotic, or optimized laparoscopic techniques paired with advanced anesthesia techniques.

Perioperative Protocols:

Surgical Techniques: Other techniques included open surgery, standard laparoscopic, and traditional orthopedic fixation. Robotic-assisted and computer-navigated orthopedic procedures or minimally invasive general surgery techniques were enhanced.

Anesthetic Management: General anesthesia with inhalational agents and opioid-based analgesia was the conventional anesthesia. Total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA), multimodal opioid-sparing regimens, regional nerve blocks, and goal-directed fluid therapy were enhanced anesthesia protocols.

Data Collection and Follow-Up: Preoperatively, demographic and clinical data (age, sex, BMI, comorbidities, ASA score) were recorded. Real-time documentation of intraoperative parameters (surgical duration, blood loss, anesthesia type, fluid balance) was made. Clinical assessors trained in standardized assessment tools collected postoperative recovery metrics. Telemedicine follow-up was performed, and follow-up evaluations were done at POD 1, 7, 30, and 90 with applicable follow-up.

Statistical Analysis: Baseline characteristics were used for descriptive statistics. Continuous variables were compared between groups using t-tests or Mann-Whitney U tests and categorical variables with chi-square or Fisher's exact test. Multivariable logistic regression models were adjusted for confounding factors, including age, sex, comorbidities, and surgical complexity. All p values were considered statistically significant with a ($p < 0.05$).

RESULTS

Advanced surgical practices with improved anesthesia techniques produced significant patient outcome improvements by decreasing both post-operative hospital readmissions (orthopedic: 7.4% to 5.1% and general: 9.2% to 6.3%) and surgical intervention needs (orthopedic: 3.2% to 1.8% and general: 4.5% to 2.7%) besides lowering in-hospital mortality (orthopedic: 1.2% to 0.8% and general: 1.5% to 1.1%). The pain management methods in both groups improved because patients had lower VAS scores (orthopedic: 4.1 instead of 6.4, general: 5.2 instead of 7.1) and required less opioid medication. Patients experienced reduced complications such as surgical site infections together with DVT and PE during their recovery, which allowed them to resume their normal activities earlier (orthopedic: 32 days versus 45 days, general: 35 days versus 50 days). The hospital costs were reduced despite the technological equipment expenses being higher initially. The combination of minimally invasive surgery, together with robotic assistance and multimodal analgesia, as well as precision anesthesia, plays a key role in enhancing perioperative care and delivering superior surgical results.

Patient results, alongside surgical and anesthetic complication rates and healthcare operational efficiency, demonstrate clear distinctions between traditional surgical methods and modern advanced surgical and anesthetic techniques in orthopedic and general surgery settings. Enhanced orthopedic surgery patients had a slightly younger mean age of 60.8 ± 7.9 years compared to conventional patients at 62.3 ± 8.5 years, while general surgery enhanced patients averaged 57.2 ± 8.7 years compared to the conventional group mean of 58.5 ± 9.2 years. Every patient group demonstrated comparable male-to-female proportions, as the male patients outnumbered females by 56 to 60 percent. BMI levels between groups stayed stable from 26.9–28.1 kg/m², and the prevalence of comorbidities decreased slightly in enhanced surgical patient populations. Patients belonging to the enhanced approach category displayed more ASA I classification in comparison to the conventional approach category, indicating better surgical baseline risk. The surgical times decreased in enhanced practice groups because orthopedic procedures decreased from 112 ± 25 minutes (conventional) to 98 ± 20 minutes (enhanced), and general procedures shortened from 130 ± 30 minutes to 110 ± 22 minutes. The implementation of enhanced techniques resulted in decreased blood loss between preoperative and postoperative periods during orthopedic surgery from 410 ± 85 mL to 290 ± 70 mL and general surgery from 520 ± 95 mL to 310 ± 75 mL, respectively. This reduction led to decreased blood transfusion requirements during surgeries for both procedures (orthopedic 12.5% to 8.1% and general 15.3% to 10.4%).

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Table 1. Baseline demographics, surgical parameters, and perioperative outcomes

Parameter	Orthopedic Surgery (Conventional)	Orthopedic Surgery (Enhanced)	General Surgery (Conventional)	General Surgery (Enhanced)
Age (years, mean ± SD)	62.3 ± 8.5	60.8 ± 7.9	58.5 ± 9.2	57.2 ± 8.7
Sex (Male/Female, %)	58/42	56/44	60/40	59/41
BMI (kg/m², mean ± SD)	27.4 ± 3.2	26.9 ± 3.1	28.1 ± 3.4	27.6 ± 3.0
Comorbidities (%)	42.5	39.2	45.8	41.6
ASA Classification (I/II/III, %)	25/50/25	30/50/20	20/55/25	28/50/22
Surgical Duration (minutes, mean ± SD)	112 ± 25	98 ± 20	130 ± 30	110 ± 22
Blood Loss (mL, mean ± SD)	410 ± 85	290 ± 70	520 ± 95	310 ± 75
Intraoperative Blood Transfusion (%)	12.5	8.1	15.3	10.4
Time to First Mobilization (hours, mean ± SD)	48 ± 6	32 ± 5	52 ± 7	35 ± 5
Time to First Oral Intake (hours, mean ± SD)	36 ± 5	24 ± 4	40 ± 6	28 ± 4
Hospital Length of Stay (days, mean ± SD)	6.8 ± 1.2	4.5 ± 0.8	7.4 ± 1.5	5.2 ± 1.0
30-Day Readmission Rate (%)	7.4	5.1	9.2	6.3
30-Day Reoperation Rate (%)	3.2	1.8	4.5	2.7
Mortality Rate (In-Hospital, 30-Day, 90-Day, %)	1.2 / 2.8 / 3.5	0.8 / 2.1 / 2.9	1.5 / 3.2 / 4.1	1.1 / 2.5 / 3.0
VAS Pain Score at 24h (mean ± SD)	6.4 ± 1.3	4.1 ± 1.2	7.1 ± 1.5	5.2 ± 1.3
Opioid Consumption (MME, mean ± SD)	52.3 ± 10.1	34.8 ± 9.5	68.4 ± 11.3	41.9 ± 10.8
Surgical Site Infection (%)	4.5	2.3	6.2	3.1
Deep Vein Thrombosis (%)	2.3	1.5	2.9	1.9
Pulmonary Embolism (%)	1.1	0.7	1.5	0.9
Return to Normal Activities (days, mean ± SD)	45 ± 8	32 ± 6	50 ± 9	35 ± 7
Total Cost of Hospitalization (USD, mean ± SD)	14,200 ± 2,150	11,500 ± 1,900	13,800 ± 2,500	12,200 ± 2,100

DISCUSSION

A complete analysis of advanced surgical practices combined with anesthetic approaches against conventional surgical methods happens throughout the study to evaluate their effects on patient outcomes while analyzing complication frequencies and healthcare resource consumption[10]. Minimally invasive surgery alongside robotic-assisted techniques and computer-guided navigation along with multimodal anesthesia strategies leads to better surgical outcomes, lower complications, and improved postoperative recovery. The changing nature of perioperative medicine becomes apparent through these findings, which demonstrate the necessity to combine new technological advances in surgery and anesthesia for better patient care. Both surgical disciplines experienced shorter operating times and reduced blood loss with fewer transfusions through the use of minimally invasive robotic-assisted surgery methods. Enhanced orthopedic surgical procedures decreased operation duration by 12.5% from 112 ± 25 minutes to 98 ± 20 minutes, whereas enhanced general surgery reduced operation duration by 15.3% from 130 ± 30 minutes to 110 ± 22 minutes[11]. The enhanced surgical group required less blood loss during surgery and needed fewer transfusions, thus demonstrating lower surgical trauma that benefits postoperative complication reduction and quickens patient recovery times[12].

The hospital stated that this decreased substantially for patients under enhanced surgical care because orthopedic patients spent 4.5 ± 0.8 days in the hospital instead of 6.8 ± 1.2 days, while those with general surgery needed 5.2 ± 1.0 days instead of 7.4 ± 1.5 days. The shortened hospital stays were most likely because patients could mobilize quickly while eating normally and experiencing better pain control, resulting in improved functional outcomes[13]. Pain management, hemodynamic stability, and postoperative recovery were greatly enhanced by switching from traditional general anesthesia with inhalational drugs and opioid-based analgesia to goal-directed total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA), multimodal opioid-sparing strategies, and regional anesthesia techniques. Multimodal analgesia and regional anesthesia are effective in reducing postoperative opioid dependence. Patients in the enhanced groups reported lower postoperative pain scores (VAS at 24 hours: orthopedic 6.4 ± 1.3 to 4.1 ± 1.2, general 7.1 ± 1.5 to 5.2 ± 1.3) and required fewer opioids (orthopedic: 52.3 ± 10.1 MME to 34.8 ± 9.5 MME, general: 68.4 ± 11.3 MME to 41.9 ± 10.8 MME) [14].

A decreased incidence of anesthetic-related problems, including postoperative nausea and vomiting (PONV), respiratory depression, and hemodynamic instability, has been linked to multimodal anesthesia, which combines regional nerve blocks, TIVA, and opioid-sparing analgesia. These enhancements are essential for lowering postoperative morbidity and improving patient comfort, both of which speed up mobilization and discharge[15]. Additionally, the results showed that the improved groups had reduced incidence of severe postoperative sequelae, such as pulmonary embolism (PE), deep vein thrombosis (DVT), and surgical site infections (SSI). Smaller incisions, less tissue damage, and better perioperative infection control techniques in minimally invasive procedures are probably the reasons why SSI rates decreased from 4.5% to 2.3% in orthopedic surgery and from 6.2% to 3.1% in general surgery. The study's main conclusions include the fact that improved perioperative techniques are more cost-effective even though they initially cost more [15, 16]. General surgery prices decreased from $13,800 ± 2,500 to $12,200 ± 2,100, and orthopedic surgery costs decreased from $14,200 ± 2,150 to $11,500 ± 1,900 in upgraded groups. Shorter hospital stays fewer problems, lower readmission rates, and less opioid use are all factors in this cost reduction, which improves resource use and long-term cost-effectiveness. The long-term advantages in terms of patient outcomes, hospital efficiency, and lower healthcare costs make robotic surgery and enhanced anesthetic procedures financially feasible for high-volume surgical facilities despite their seemingly greater initial costs[17, 18].

CONCLUSION

In orthopedic and general surgery, this study shows that improved surgical and anesthetic methods result in quicker recovery, fewer problems, better pain management, and lower medical expenses. Perioperative care could be revolutionized by the widespread use of robotic surgery, computer-guided navigation, minimally invasive

procedures, and multimodal anesthesia, which would maximize healthcare efficiency and improve patient safety. To guarantee that patients in all healthcare settings benefit from advances in precision surgery and anesthesia, future research should work to provide access to these technologies globally.

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