

#EndPJParalysis - Get Up, Get Dressed, Get Moving

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BACKGROUND – Promoting the #EndPJParalysis Movement

Post-surgical recovery, particularly after total knee and hip replacements, has undergone significant advancements. However, one challenge that remains is hospital-associated functional decline (HAFD), where patients, especially older adults, experience reduced mobility and independence during hospitalization. This decline can prolong recovery, increase the length of stay, and negatively impact post-discharge outcomes (Zisberg et al., 2020). The #EndPJParalysis movement, which originated in the UK in 2016, was created to address this issue by encouraging patients to change out of hospital gowns into their personal clothing as early as post-op day 1. This simple intervention promotes early mobility, restores a sense of dignity, and accelerates the transition from being a passive patient to an active participant in recovery.

PURPOSE

The core goal of #EndPJParalysis is to encourage early mobilization in hospital settings by motivating patients to get dressed in their personal clothes as soon as medically appropriate. Wearing personal clothing signals a shift in mindset, helping patients feel less like “sick” individuals and more like active participants in their recovery. Dressing is a functional activity that engages patients both physically and mentally, thus promoting independence and reducing dependency on nursing staff.

METHODS

In December 2023, the occupational therapy team implemented a protocol allowing elective total knee and hip surgery patients to change into personal clothing on post-operative day 1 during their initial OT evaluation. Patients were evaluated based on several criteria to determine their suitability for wearing personal clothing. If patients were incontinent, experiencing medical instability (such as post-operative anemia or orthostatic hypotension), or required a high level of assistance, they were advised to remain in hospital gowns rather than change into personal clothing. Additionally, OT and PT staff educate patients on the expectation of changing into personal clothing on post-op day 1 during UMC's Joint Mobility Camp, encouraging them to bring appropriate clothing to the hospital.



SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Research consistently highlights the benefits of early mobilization following surgery. Studies indicate that patients who engage in mobility within 24-48 hours post-surgery experience better outcomes, such as shorter hospital stays, reduced post-surgical complications, and quicker restoration of functional independence (Hoyer et al., 2022; Davenport et al., 2020). Barriers to early mobility, such as remaining in bed or wearing hospital gowns, can hinder recovery and contribute to functional decline (Hoyer et al., 2022). Early mobilization also decreases the risk of common post-operative complications like pressure ulcers, deep vein thrombosis (DVT), and hospital-acquired infections (Davenport et al., 2020). Encouraging patients to dress in personal clothing as early as post-op day 1 supports the performance of activities of daily living (ADLs) and aligns with occupational therapy principles focused on promoting independence (Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2022; American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020). Additionally, the American Nurses Association (2021) emphasizes the importance of patient-centered care in fostering an environment that encourages mobility and independence. The psychological and emotional benefits of dressing in personal clothing are significant, providing patients with a sense of dignity, normalcy, and control, which helps mitigate feelings of helplessness and enhances mental well-being (Houghton et al., 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

The #EndPJParalysis campaign promotes early mobilization through personal clothing changes, enhancing recovery trajectories and improving patient outcomes. Expanding this initiative beyond the orthopedic and spine unit to other medical and surgical units at UMC could further boost patient engagement and reduce hospital stays. Future efforts should focus on establishing standardized guidelines for clothing use, training staff on early mobilization, and educating patients on the benefits of dressing in personal clothing. By prioritizing patient autonomy and mobility, we can foster a supportive environment that promotes optimal recovery for all patients.

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