

Discharged from outpatient care post-arthroplasty at 3 months without seeing an Orthopaedic Surgeon

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Background: There is high demand for orthopaedic services. This demand is expected to increase over time. The success of Post Arthroplasty Review (PAR) clinics was highlighted by international published evidence and outcomes at other Melbourne Hospitals. In 2014 Monash Health implemented a PAR Clinic and part of an Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Implementation Program conducted by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

Intervention: The Monash Health PAR Clinic re-directs patients who have undergone hip or knee replacement to have their outpatient reviews with an experienced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist instead of a doctor. With the commencement of the project, Monash Health’s Orthopaedic Unit implemented a new model of outpatient care (MOC) for patients post arthroplasty in which patients who are progressing well at three months post-operatively are discharged. The MOC results in patients being discharged from the orthopaedic unit without seeing a surgeon in the outpatient setting. All patient contacts that occur in the PAR Clinic are discussed with an Orthopaedic Consultant.

A rigorous training and competency program funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services supported the implementation of the program.

Results: 100% (26) of patient respondents felt their expectations of their appointment or assessment by the Physiotherapist were met. 90% (9) of staff responded that the PAR Clinic is well integrated into orthopaedics. No patients who were discharged at three months post-operatively have been re-referred to orthopaedics. Economic modelling found the PAR Clinic MOC to be \$27 less expensive per occasion of service compared to the previous MOC.

Discussion: This MOC has the earliest standard time-point for discharge from orthopaedic outpatient follow-up in Victoria. Experienced Physiotherapists can be effectively utilised to implement a MOC with outpatient discharge at three months post arthroplasty, without the patient seeing a surgeon. Long-term outcomes of discharged PAR Clinic patients are needed.