

REDUCING READMISSION FOLLOWING BARIATRIC SURGERY: IS THERE AN APP FOR THIS?

Jordan Heuser¹, Azusa Maeda², Caterina Masino², Timothy Jackson^{1,2}, Allan Okrainec^{1,2}

¹*Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

²*Division of General Surgery, University Health Network, Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

INTRODUCTION

Emergency department (ED) visits and readmissions remain a critical issue in bariatric surgery patients. This study examines the impact of an educational mobile app on healthcare utilization and patient outcomes.

METHODS

Bariatric surgery patients were recruited prospectively to use an app that provides peri-operative education and tracking of postoperative symptoms. The cohort was compared to those patients who did not enrol in the app for the study period, September 2017 to April 2018. Data on 30-day readmissions and ED visits from the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP) database were compared. Data from the app was analyzed to evaluate user satisfaction and adherence.

RESULTS

338 bariatric surgery patients were included, with 104 patients enrolled in the mobile app. There was equal distribution based on age, gender, BMI and type of bariatric procedure between the two groups. There was no difference in ED visits (7/104, 6.7% vs. 14/234, 6.0%) or readmissions (6/104, 5.8% vs. 7/234, 3.0%) between patients with and without the app, respectively. The app surveys indicated high overall ratings (37/50, 74%) and usage rates (86% of patients). Additionally, the survey showed 12.6% of patients perceived at least one avoided ED visit.

CONCLUSIONS

Patient satisfaction and use of the mobile app were high, although a reduction in ED visits and readmissions was not found despite a significant percentage of patients that reported avoided ED visits because of the mobile app. Further investigation is warranted to evaluate reduction of other healthcare resources such as nurse educators.