

YOUR HEALTH

Studies Suggest Ways To Improve Patient Safety

(NAPSA)—Research shows that well calibrated doses of anesthesia can dramatically improve the quality of patient care during and immediately after surgery, and may even reduce postoperative mortality rates in the longer term.

With 30 million surgeries taking place every year in the United States, some say as many as 50,000 deaths could be related to long-term outcomes associated with anesthesia and the surgical experience.

The data cited by the anesthesiologists at the Medical College of Georgia and the MCG Health System come from a yearlong quality improvement initiative in the hospital's operating rooms. The study included the adoption of an advanced brain-monitoring device called BIS technology.

The study, which was spearheaded by Dr. James G. Mayfield, showed that by measuring depth of consciousness, BIS-guided anesthesia care enabled patients to wake sooner, respond quicker, experience less nausea, vomiting and pain, go home sooner, and have fewer postoperative cardiovascular problems.

Studies conducted in Florida and Sweden have shown that patients who experience deeper levels of anesthesia during surgery may have an increased risk of death during the first year after their operations.

Taking a long-term perspective to patient outcome is a dramatic departure from traditional safety initiatives, which typically focused on adverse events in the days



A new study indicates that tailored doses of anesthesia may increase patient safety after an operation.

immediately following surgery.

“We believe optimal anesthesia care can dramatically improve the safety and quality of patient care, including reducing morbidity and mortality,” said Dr. C. Alvin Head. “This new research suggests our focus may need to shift, as the risk of dying during the first postoperative year may be as high as five to 14 percent in certain patient populations.”

“In recent years, we have gained tremendous insight into how chronic inflammation drives diseases such as heart disease, cancer or even Alzheimer’s in our patients. This insight causes us to question whether or not acute immune response to surgery can accelerate disease progression in some cases,” said Dr. Steffen E. Meiler.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.MCGHealth.org.