

# EVALUATING PHYSICAL THERAPIST STUDENTS' CLINICAL PERFORMANCE IN ACUTE CARE: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS COMPARING STUDENT-TREATED AND STAFF-TREATED PATIENT OUTCOMES AFTER TOTAL HIP ARTHROPLASTY

Rindflesch AB, Hake MP, Haack RM, Kleven AD, McPartlin MK, Strikwerda JA

Mayo School of Health Sciences, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, Rochester MN

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**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study is to compare the outcome of two groups of patients following acute rehabilitation of total hip arthroplasty. One group of patients was managed by physical therapy students. The other group was managed by licensed physical therapists.

**SUBJECT(S):** We compared the outcomes of 78 patients with THA managed by student physical therapists to 78 patients with THA managed by licensed physical therapists admitted between 2010 and 2014. Inclusion criteria: 1st time THA, aged 55-70, consented to research.

**METHODS AND MATERIALS:** This was a retrospective cohort review of electronic health records to determine patient outcomes. The primary outcome measure used was the AM-PAC "6-clicks" Basic Mobility Form. Other variables included number of PT sessions, total therapy minutes, distance walked and patient BMI.

**ANALYSES:** Patient baseline and discharge outcomes as measured by the AM-PAC "6-clicks" were analyzed with mixed-model analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

**RESULTS:** There was no statistically significant difference in patient outcomes between groups, even after differences in patient BMI and number of therapy sessions were controlled. AM-PAC scores from student-treated patients changed from  $14.5 \pm 2.4$  at baseline to  $18.2 \pm 2.1$  at discharge, whereas AM-PAC scores from therapist-treated patients changed from  $14.4 \pm 2.4$  at baseline to  $18.2 \pm 2.1$  at discharge.

**CONCLUSIONS:** AM-PAC outcomes for patients following THA are equally efficacious and efficient whether patients were treated by students under supervision or by licensed physical therapists.

**IMPLICATIONS:** DPT students under supervision are capable of achieving similar patient outcomes as licensed physical therapists for patients with THA.