The Ontario surgical quality network has decided to continue our Committed to Better: Enhancing Surgical Recovery campaign for a second year. We are asking teams to renew their commitment to improve surgical outcomes and support pandemic recovery by implementing new initiatives, or building on their chosen indicators from last year, with the aim of improving at least one surgical outcome by 25%. Further, teams are asked to commit to advancing equity in surgical care to maximize the quality of care regardless of gender, ethnicity, geographic location, and socioeconomic status. Year 2 of the campaign will be detailed in an upcoming webinar.

January 2022 NSQIP-Ontario Semi-Annual Report

This semi-annual report (SAR) includes risk-adjusted data for surgeries that occurred between July 2020 and June 2021. We are pleased to report that hospital all-cause urinary tract infection (UTI) rates in Ontario have decreased for the fourth year in a row, and mortality and readmission and pneumonia rates continue to improve. There is, however, an opportunity for improvement—especially in some of the indicators addressed in our Enhancing Surgical Recovery campaign including surgical site infections (SSI) and venous thromboembolism (VTE). Rates continue to improve. There is, however, an opportunity for improvement.

New Feature: Pandemic Response

Yvette Young, SCR at Hamilton Health Sciences, reflects on being an SCR during the pandemic.

1. Regular touchpoints: It is helpful to maintain ongoing communication via a pre-booked weekly check-in meeting with the project leader, and to keep our monthly project team meeting. Although sometimes we’ve had to cancel last minute, it’s been key to recognize when those of our team with patient-facing roles have not had capacity so that I can take on more of the work to keep our project moving forward.

2. Ignoring the suspended lockout: The other challenge for me has been to keep on top of completing NSQIP data entry cycles when deployed to other work at the hospital. I think ignoring the suspended NSQIP platform lockout has been helpful. Although shorter cycles made it easier to get through the entries, if I let too many cycles go, I knew it would be very difficult to catch-up.

Contributor Shout-Out

In this feature, we like to spotlight an ON-SQIN member or team that has made a significant contribution to the network. This time, we’d like to mention Lisa McLean, Surgical Clinical Reviewer (SCR) at Markham Stouffville Hospital, Oak Valley Health, for mentoring several new team members. Lisa’s team recently won the “Greatest Improvement in Surgical Outcomes” SQIPPY award and Surgeon Champion, Dr. Patrick Whelan, attributes much of the team’s success to Lisa’s dedication. Lisa is always willing to answer questions and share her insights with the network.

Closing Out

To learn more about NSQIN and how you can get involved, please visit our website or contact ONSQIN@ontariohealth.ca to share your hospital’s work in the next update.

Featured Initiatives

Enhancing Recovery Campaign Progress

St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton

Despite the pandemic and leadership changes, the periphereal team at St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton has made improvements in their quality improvement projects. They demonstrated an overall decrease of 25% in prescribed opioid pills over the last two years for outpatient surgeries, and their efforts were further exemplified in the NSQIP semi-annual report (SAR), where they were rated exemplary in all-cases surgical site infection, pneumonia, and readmissions. The team is also involved in augmentation to the hospital electronic medical records (EMR) system. New Surgeon Champion, Dr. David Choi, notes: “We also understand the importance of feedback to do and recognize success within our institution, and are working on an EMR-based form of feedback to staff, services, as well as individual surgeons.” Congratulations to the team on your successes!

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

As part of the Enhancing Surgical Recovery campaign, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre has implemented ERAS protocols specific to elderly patients in general surgery. As identified by surgical staff in the Acute Care Surgery, Trauma, and Surgical Oncology teams, these protocols will target patients over 70 years of age having elective or emergency surgery with the aim of decreasing length of stay and increasing those discharged to their current place of residence (e.g., home, retirement home, long-term care). A multidisciplinary working group has identified several opportunities for improvement, including increasing awareness that elderly-focused care can be lifesaving, and focusing limited time on acute issues such as early mobility.

Surgical 411 Podcast

As part of our ongoing commitment to quality improvement, we have a new feature to add to the list of ON-SQIN supports: our podcast, “Surgical 411.” Our most recent episode features an interview with Dr. Patrick Whelan, Surgeon Champion at Markham Stouffville Hospital. Dr. Whelan shared how his engagement in surgical quality improvement has evolved over his time in the network. For past episodes, visit the “Attachments” tab of the Surgical Quality Improvement page on Quorum.

2022 ACS Quality and Safety Conference—Call for Abstracts

This year’s American College of Surgeons (ACS) Quality and Safety Conference will take place virtually from July 15 to 18, 2022. The deadline for submitting an abstract for the upcoming ACS Quality and Safety Conference is March 13, 2022.