

The State Of Surgical Care

Patient experiences
pre- and post-operation
in North Carolina, 2024





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A revealing first look at patient experiences before and after surgery

In healthcare, where every interaction holds significance, the journey of patients through their pre-operative experience is pivotal. It's a juncture where reassurance, care, and attention to detail pave the way for smoother transitions through surgical procedures and recoveries.

As someone who has been deeply entrenched in skilled Physical Therapy and rehabilitation for over a decade, I've witnessed firsthand the intricacies of patient care and the impact it bears on their well-being. It's not merely about administering treatments or conducting procedures; it's about orchestrating an experience with empathy, understanding, and efficacy.

But can we measure that type of care and its impact on patients? This inaugural study of patients in North Carolina attempts to do just that - and will look at how patient experiences change each year going forward.

This study stemmed not just from professional curiosity but from a genuine desire to unravel the intricacies of patient experiences and refine our approaches accordingly. What the results show is a revelation: Each response painted a vivid portrait of patient journeys, their apprehensions, their expectations, and their real experiences.

Armed with this newfound clarity, we have developed a care roadmap that transcends conventional pathways and charts a course guided by empathy, efficiency, and excellence to propel us towards a future where every patient interaction embodies the essence of compassionate care.

This survey not only provides a deeper understanding of patient perspectives but also presents a tangible opportunity to enhance surgical outcomes. By identifying areas of concern and unmet needs, we can tailor our pre-operative protocols to better address patient anxieties, streamline processes, and ultimately optimize recovery times.

These insights should serve as a catalyst for innovation, and help to improve the outcomes for all the participants in care, regardless of their side of the scalpel.



Katie Reph

Founder and CEO
Pre-Op Solutions

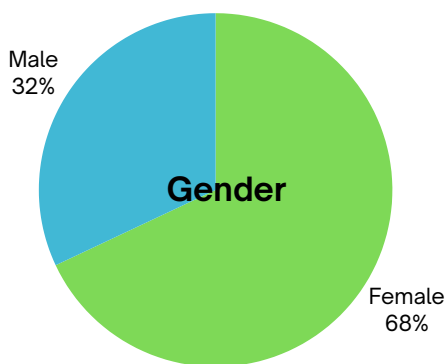
Survey methodology and participants

METHODOLOGY

Pre-Op Solutions partnered with Eastcoast Research to conduct an online survey of North Carolina residents, age 55 and older, who have had a major surgery in the past five years.

The survey was fielded from December 20, 2023 – January 12, 2024 and 610 responses were collected. Partial and duplicate responses were eliminated. Of the remaining responses, 150 were selected to be representative based on age, major surgery and region.

This selection criteria ensured a diverse pool of respondents who could provide vast perspectives on various aspects of pre-operative and post-operative care, as well as their overall patient experience.

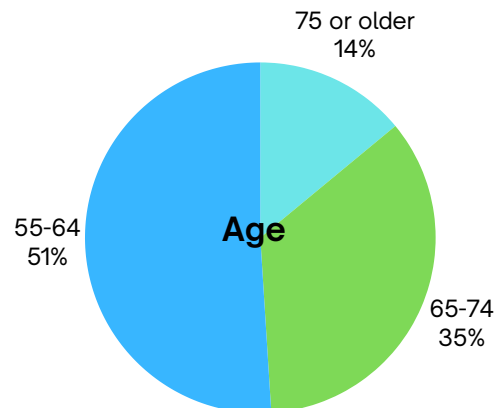


Orthopedic surgeries comprised **76%** of the major surgical procedures reported.

This emphasis on orthopedic interventions underscores the relevance of our findings within a specific medical domain characterized by unique challenges and considerations.

65% of the total participants are Western North Carolina residents.

This regional distribution offers insights into the experiences and perspectives of individuals within a distinct geographical context, shedding light on potential variations in healthcare access, resources, and patient experiences across different regions.



The understanding gap around surgery and recovery

The emotional and physical landscape surrounding surgical interventions and recovery periods holds significant clinical relevance. The survey data illuminates the emotional responses of patients as they navigate the pre-operative phase, shedding light on the psychological complexities inherent in surgical experiences.

The results yielded a comprehensive portrayal of emotional distress ...

95% of respondents reported feelings of anxiety, worry, fear, or, in some cases, depression, before their surgery.

These sentiments underscore the profound impact of surgical procedures on patients' mental well-being, highlighting the need for improved care approaches that address both physical and emotional aspects.



Furthermore, the survey uncovered a concerning gap in patients' understanding of their surgeries and recoveries ...

32% indicated fair or no understanding of the procedure and subsequent rehabilitation process before surgery.

This deficit in knowledge not only contributes to heightened emotional distress but also poses potential risks to post-operative outcomes. It emphasizes the imperative for enhanced patient education initiatives tailored to individual needs, ensuring informed decision-making and proactive engagement in the treatment journey.

Of the **68%** who indicated they were completely comfortable with the understanding of the procedure and their recovery, **48%** indicated they had a negative outcome from their surgery.

Outcomes and emotions of surgery

58% of total respondents reported a negative outcome around their surgery.

Responses varied to include: increased recovery time, infection, uncontrolled pain, falls, blood clots and more.

“Frustrating that no one there cared.”

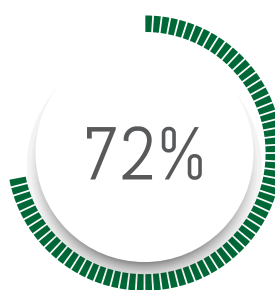
These findings underscore the pivotal role of patient-centered care models in addressing emotional and physical needs and optimizing overall surgical experiences.

35% reported they spent less than one hour on pre-op education, including time with their healthcare professionals, research on their own, pre-op care, etc.

By acknowledging and addressing these potential barriers to recovery preemptively, we can implement targeted interventions aimed at mitigating distress, and ultimately enhancing the overall quality of care provided to our patients.

“I needed a better recovery plan”

87% reported their recovery was four weeks or more.



Reported they would have benefited from 1-on-1 education that was individualized to them

“I did not have all the information I needed and no PT was offered.”

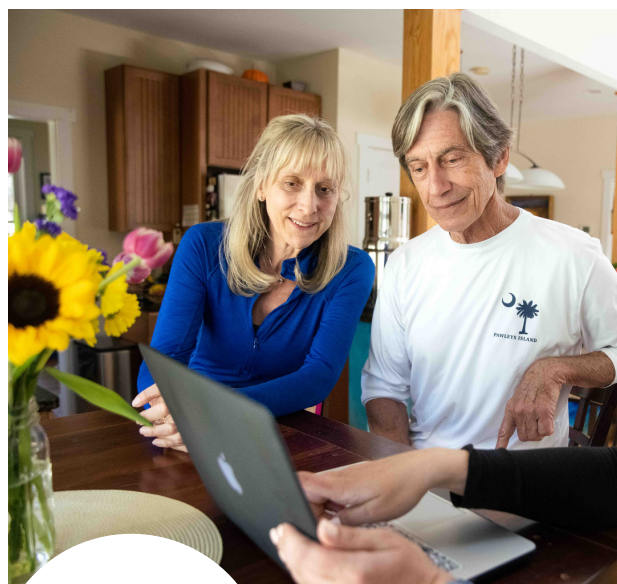
The impacts of pre-op home care

The survey measured the impact of in-home pre-operative care. The provision of pre-operative care in the familiar setting of one's home emerged with profound implications for both emotional well-being and clinical outcomes.

96% of respondents reported the in-home pre-op visit helped them feel more prepared for their surgery and recovery.

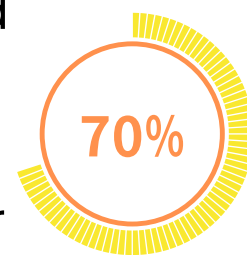
By bringing care into the familiar surroundings of patients, we not only mitigate anxiety, worry, and fear but also foster a sense of preparedness that is indispensable for navigating the impending surgery and recovery.

While **84%** said they has some pre-op education prior to their surgery, only **16%** said they received pre-op home visits before their surgery that assisted them with preparing for their recovery.



“I found out about what I might need after surgery from friends who had similar surgeries.”

70% reported an in-home pre-op visit reduced their recovery time



The impacts of pre-op home care

The notion that pre-operative care administered in the home setting can wield such a transformative influence on recovery timelines is a testament to the potency of tailored, patient-focused approaches.

70% of individuals reported in-home pre-operative care helped reduce their recovery time.

This finding illuminates the tangible clinical benefits of personalized, home-based interventions, proving that the impact extends beyond emotional well-being to tangible improvements in post-operative recovery.

“I needed a radical shift from the present”

In the narratives provided by participants, a recurring theme echoed the need for a structured "recovery plan." These firsthand accounts emphasize the essentiality of personalized pre-operative strategies tailored to the unique circumstances of those navigating the recovery journey alone. The absence of a support system underlines the critical role that healthcare providers play in formulating comprehensive recovery plans that extend beyond the operating room, addressing the multifaceted needs of individuals facing the recovery process solo.

85% of respondents required the use of Durable Medical Equipment (DME) after their surgery.

However, it is imperative to note that this figure could have been higher, as some participants may not have had a clear understanding of the full spectrum of items qualifying as DME.

This discrepancy in reported figures emphasizes the importance of education and communication surrounding DME requirements, ensuring that patients are equipped with the necessary tools to navigate their post-operative periods with confidence and efficacy.



Awareness of pre-operative care

44% are not married or living with a partner, meaning they are likely living alone - a factor that amplifies the importance of pre-operative care.

Living alone not only accentuates the emotional challenges associated with major surgeries but also underscores the heightened stakes when a robust recovery plan is not in place.

These insights illuminate the need for a coordinated approach to pre-operative care that extends its reach to encompass not only clinical aspects but also the activities of daily life that profoundly shape the post-operative journey.

53% of respondents report they would have used in-home pre-op services had they known they existed.

In this landscape fraught with challenges, Pre-Op Solutions emerges as a beacon of hope—a catalyst for change poised to revolutionize the pre-operative experience and, by extension, ameliorate the trajectory of patient outcomes.

Thankfully, among these revelations is the resounding impact of in-home pre-operative care, with patients attesting to an increased preparedness. This underscores the pivotal role that tailored interventions play in fostering resilience among patients facing the prospect of surgery.

30% reported they would be willing to pay \$100 or more out of pocket for pre-op services.

The pursuit of pre-operative excellence is not a critique of past post-operative care practices but rather a testament to our unwavering commitment to continuous improvement. By redirecting our focus towards the pre-operative phase, we acknowledge the pivotal role it plays in shaping the entirety of the patient journey.

Through innovation and empathy, we can chart a course towards a future of elevated patient experiences and outcomes.

85% said their surgery cost \$10,000 or more, and **15%** reported more than \$100,000



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