

Short notice cancellations of elective orthopaedic surgeries – impact on patients' lives.

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Introduction:

Elective orthopaedic surgeries can be cancelled with short notice both of pure medical- but also of administrative reasons – the surgeon can be ill, there can be a shortage of beds in the ward or the surgical program can be full due to emergency surgeries.

Sometimes the surgery is even cancelled the same day as it is supposed to occur. The patients are notified when lying in the ward prepared and waiting for surgery. The goal of this study was to perform an assessment and analysis on whether the cancellations have a psychological impact and effect on the patients' lives.

Methods:

Using qualitative interpretative description, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 patients from Karolinska Sjukhuset Solna, who's hip- or knee replacement surgery has been cancelled with short notice.

The interviews were taken place in Stockholm, Sweden, from April 2014- February 2015.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis to identify categories and themes.

Results:

The analysis show that this group of patients experiences the situation they are in, as psychologically challenging.

Six major themes emerged. Stress, insomnia, pain, depression, lack of faith and apathy. The results were the same for men as for women.

Discussion:

There are yet no comparative studies published. The socio-economic effects the short cancellations have, are widely researched, but until now we have known little about the effect it has on the patients and how they experience the situation they are put in.

Conclusions:

Our study reveals the suffering, this group of patients experience. It should be measured against the socio-economic factors that determine the administrative surgical system.

