

Recommended Curriculum Guidelines for Family Medicine Residents

Care of the Surgical Patient

The family physician is often the first physician to interact with a patient who has a surgical diagnosis. The comprehensive care delivered by family physicians spans the preoperative, perioperative and post-operative time frames. Surgical care may be defined as the body of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to evaluate and manage conditions and disorders requiring operative intervention.

Attitudes

The resident should develop attitudes that encompass:

- A. Recognition of the importance of the family physician and surgeon collaborating as partners in the evaluation of and decision making for the care of surgical patients.
- B. Awareness of the principles involved in differentiating the causative origin of clinical symptoms resulting in the need for medical versus surgical intervention.
- C. Sensitivity to the patient's and family's concerns and anxieties regarding the potential need for surgical intervention.

Knowledge

The resident should demonstrate knowledge of:

- A. Basic principles of surgical diagnosis
 1. Basic surgical anatomy
 2. Wound physiology, care and healing processes
 3. Clinical assessment, including history, physical examination, laboratory evaluation and differential diagnosis of key signs and symptoms of surgical conditions
 4. Invasive versus noninvasive diagnostic tests
- B. Anesthesia
 1. Premedication
 2. Agents and routes of administration
 3. Resuscitation methods
- C. Recognition of surgical emergencies
- D. Ethical, legal, and socioeconomic considerations
 1. Informed consent
 2. Quality of life
 3. Cultural sensitivity
 4. End-of-life issues
- E. Preoperative assessment
 1. Recognition of appropriate surgical candidates
 2. Surgical risk assessment
 3. Comorbid diseases
 4. Antibiotic prophylaxis
 5. Patient preparation (bowel, etc.)
- F. Intraoperative care
 1. Basic principles of asepsis and sterile technique
 2. Patient monitoring
 3. Fluid management
 4. Blood requirements
 5. Temperature control
 6. Use of basic surgical instruments
- G. Postoperative care
 1. Routine
 - a. Wound care
 - b. Patient mobilization
 - c. Nutritional management
 - d. Pain management
 - e. Suctions and drains
 2. Common complications
 - a. Fever work-up and management
 - b. Wound dehiscence
 - c. Urinary retention
 - d. Hemorrhage
 - e. Pneumonia
 - f. Atelectasis
 - g. Fluid overload
 - h. Transfusion reaction
 - i. Thrombophlebitis
 - j. Pulmonary embolism
 - k. Oliguria
 - l. Respiratory insufficiency
 - m. Ileus
 - n. Infection
 - o. Shock
- H. Outpatient surgery
 1. Patient selection
 2. Conscious sedation
 3. Postoperative observation principles
 4. Follow-up
- I. Office care of common conditions
 1. Lumps, bumps, and abscesses
 2. Simple lacerations
 3. Superficial burns
 4. Common methods of anesthesia used in the office
- J. Adjunctive care of organ donors and recipients
 1. Long-term care of organ recipients

Skills

The resident should demonstrate skills in:

- A. Preoperative assessment
 1. Surgical risk evaluation
 2. Physical assessment
 3. Radiographic assessment
 4. Noninvasive diagnostic procedures
 5. Invasive diagnostic procedures
 - a. Paracentesis
 - b. Nasogastric lavage
 - c. Peritoneal lavage
 - d. Thoracentesis
 - e. Bladder aspiration
 - f. Central venous access (central venous pressure, Swan-Ganz catheter)
 - g. Venous cutdown
 - h. Arterial puncture/catheterization
 - i. Needle aspiration/biopsy technique
- B. Recognition of need for emergent surgical techniques
 1. Cricothyroidotomy
 2. Needle thoracostomy
 3. Pericardiocentesis
- C. Intraoperative skills
 1. Preparation and draping of operative field
 2. First assist at major surgery
 3. Basic use of surgical instruments
 4. Incision and dissection
 5. Exposure/retraction
 6. Hemostasis
 7. Estimation of blood loss
 8. Fluid replacement
 9. Wound closure
 - a. Technique selection (ligature, staples, adhesives)
 - b. Suture selection
 - c. Drains
 - d. Dressings
- D. Postoperative care
 1. Suture removal
 2. Dressing changes
 3. Drain removal



- E. Minor surgical techniques
 - 1. Local anesthesia
 - 2. Simple excision
 - 3. Incision and drainage of cysts and abscesses
 - 4. Aspiration
 - 5. Ear piercing
 - 6. Foreign body removal
 - 7. Minor burns
 - 8. Vasectomy
 - 9. Cauterization/electrodesiccation
 - 10. Punch biopsy
 - 11. Wound debridement
 - 12. Enucleation/excision of external thrombotic hemorrhoid
 - 13. Nail surgery
- F. Counseling regarding advanced directives, organ donations, and end-of-life issues ■

Resources

Mayeaux, Jr., E. J. and Zuber, Thomas J., editors. Atlas of Primary Care Procedures. Philadelphia, PA. Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2004.

Fowler, Grant C. and Pfenninger, John L., editors. Procedures for Primary Care. Mosby, St. Louis, MO, 2nd Edition. 2003.

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