

Alberta's Strategic Clinical Networks

Elder-friendly Approaches to the Surgical Environment (EASE)

The Goal

As our population ages and more seniors come to the hospital for surgery, our health care system needs to adapt to the special needs of this population. The Elder-friendly Approaches to the Surgical Environment (EASE) study aims to implement elder-friendly, evidence-based practices onto a general surgery ward, to improve post-operative outcomes.



The Process

Starting with the Acute Care and Emergency Surgery Service at the University of Alberta Hospital, the EASE study will introduce elder-friendly practices during and after surgical care, to better support older patients through their hospital stay. The goal is to reduce complications and return patients to their normal routine sooner.

The EASE study initiatives will include: co-locating patients over the age of 65 years to a single unit; having an interdisciplinary care team that includes a Geriatrician; initiating confusion prevention strategies; getting patients moving earlier in their recovery; and optimizing nutrition. Currently, we are collecting pre-intervention data so that we can measure how the changes we make affect the care of our patients. The EASE interventions will begin in Summer of 2015. The EASE study is relevant to the sustainability of the health care system and to improving outcomes for older surgical patients.

The Outcome

A preliminary analysis showed that complication rates in our older patient population were tripled compared to our younger population, which resulted in our older patients staying twice as long in hospital. This shows the need for evidence-based approaches targeted to our older surgical patient population.



Dr. Khadaroo visits with former patient John Robertson, one of many patients who could benefit from the EASE study.

The Team

This project is led by surgeon-scientist Dr. Rachel Khadaroo and is supported by the Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network. Introducing elder-friendly care across Alberta Health Services is strongly supported and the EASE project will be the starting point for making large successful changes province wide. The EASE project is funded by a PRIHS grant from AIHS/AHS.