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The Benefits of Physical Activity on Recovery Times

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Background:

Throughout our time in nursing school, we have been taught that early ambulation is important in recovery. We decided to research this topic more in depth to determine the validity of what we have been learning. We have found and read different articles that discuss trials of ambulation and its effects on patients who are recovering from various illnesses and surgeries.

Research Question:

Does physical activity and exercise help with recovering from illness and/or surgery in the adult population?

EBP Intervention:

The EBP that we plan to implement is creating an exercise/activity plan before surgery or upon admission. How we will go about this is described below:

- Plans will be created before surgery and early in care with the intention of being used while admitted at the hospital.
- The nurse will make sure anyone involved in the care of the patient is aware of the exercise activity plan.
- The physician or physical therapist can dictate if any part of the exercise plan is not appropriate for that patient.
- NACs can help with ambulating the plan.
- Family members and caregivers will be aware of the plans to potentially carry on the plan at home if they choose.
- The nurse will have to conduct an assessment to determine the amount of assistance the patient needs and will collaborate with a physical therapist to get the most accurate plan.
- The nurse will set goals that are realistic and individualized for the patients to act as a motivating factor. They will be written on the white board in the patient's room.
- The nurse will educate the patient on the importance of exercise/activity so they are aware of any safety precautions and how this will help them in the long run.

Expected Outcomes:

- **Reduced risk of complications** such as deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, pneumonia, urinary retention, and pressure ulcers.
- **Faster recovery** since movement promotes tissue healing, reduces muscle atrophy, and restores normal physiological functions faster allowing for shorter hospital stays and quicker recovery times.
- **Improved respiratory function** because activity promotes deep breathing and coughing, which helps prevent respiratory complications.
- **Improved circulation** as movement stimulates blood flow which also reduces the risk of blood clots.
- **Reduced pain and discomfort** by preventing muscle weakness and joint stiffness by maintaining use and mobility.
- **Improved physiological status** by empowering patients with a sense of independence and control.

Findings:

Through our research of different studies we found evidence to support our initial question: Does physical activity and exercise help with recovering from illness and/or surgery in the adult population? For example, in an article about a study completed by J. Calatayud, we learned that Isometric knee flexion, isometric hip abduction, VAS, WOMAC, ROM extension and flexion were greater for intervention group compared to control (Calatayud, 2017). The intervention group completed high intensity resistance training prior to a total knee arthoplasty. Also, a study completed by S. Goddard proved that supervised exercise programs completed by ICU patients provided a positive influence on physical recovery and motivation (Goddard, 2024).

References:

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