A narrative review and content analysis of functional and quality of life measures used to evaluate the outcome after total shoulder arthroplasty (TSA): an ICF linking application

We found, analyzed and compared patient surveys that measure function and quality of life after shoulder replacement surgery.

What is the problem?

Shoulder pain often results in high levels of disability and healthcare costs. Shoulder joint replacement surgery can provide pain relief and restore function for patients with severe shoulder arthritis. Many surveys have been developed to measure the effectiveness of treatments for shoulder problems. For example, there are tools that measures patients' function (e.g., shoulder movement), and self-reported surveys that ask patients about their pain levels, or ability to do daily tasks after shoulder surgery. Most research to date has focused on testing if a survey produces the same results (reliability) or measures what it's supposed to measure (validity). A better understanding of the content of various surveys is important to help doctors and researchers determine if a shoulder treatment is successful. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) is a standard language that we used to classify the content of shoulder outcome measures.

How did the team study the problem?

We reviewed all the studies that used self-reported surveys in people recovering from a shoulder replacement surgery. We used different websites and search strategies to find these articles. We used a set of rules (ICF) to code the questions so we could compare the issues that were covered on each outcome measure.

What did the team find?

We found 35 different outcome measures have been used to measure patient recovery of function or quality of life after shoulder joint replacement. Most measures (n=10) focused on measuring pain and functional disability (e.g., American Shoulder and Elbow Society Score). Mental health was rarely evaluated.

How can this research be used?

In the research field, surveys on quality of life measure how disease or condition influence the subjective well-being of a person. Self-reported surveys are not always clear about which one they are trying to measure or how they decided what issues were important to patients. There is overlap across different outcome measures. No single one is likely to measure all things important to a patient, but this content analysis may help users pick between different measures.

Cautions

Content is important, but the survey/tool must also be reliable and valid. These factors should all be considered when choosing self-reported surveys for patients with shoulder problems.

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