

Patients Recovering From Abdominal Surgery Who Walked With Volunteers Exhibited Improved Postoperative Recovery Profiles During Hospitalization

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Published online: 5 September 2014
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With great interest, we read the recent article by Le et al. [1] describing the impact of early walking on the mental and physical recovery of postoperative patients. It is admirable that the cited authors considered mental health in this regard. This often is ignored by clinicians assessing postoperative recovery profiles.

Findings clearly show that exercise exerts positive effects on mental health [2] and that behavioral activation is an effective intervention for treating depression [3]. Thus, it is eminently sensible that the cited authors helped patients to walk. However, we were surprised to note that no statistically significant difference was evident between the two reported groups in terms of SF-12 mental composite scores. We expected to see higher scores for the walkers. An explanation may be that the participating (“walking”) patients had lower SF-12 mental composite scores than the others before the “walking to recovery” intervention was instituted. We believe that it would be useful to compare the pre- and postoperative mental composite scores of the two groups to illuminate any possible effect of walking on mental health.

In our opinion, future studies assessing postoperative recovery profiles should consider both pre- and postoperative mental scores, readily obtained using specific mental health assessment instruments.

References

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