

## Regional Anesthesia and Multimodal Pain Management Improves Outcomes, Reduces Costs and Boosts Patient Satisfaction

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Today's healthcare landscape, with its focus on accountability, cost containment and performance-driven reimbursement, has transformed the way physicians and hospitals alike are approaching patient care. The old "silo" model of episodic, anecdotal and independent care has given way to increased collaboration across the healthcare spectrum, encompassing primary care physicians, surgeons, anesthesiologists, physical therapists, nurses, pharmacists and hospital administration alike.

**Regional anesthesia**, a technique for providing anesthesia to a select nerve or group of nerves either for perioperative anesthesia/ analgesia or as an adjunct for post-operative pain control, exemplifies this collaborative approach and is resulting in reduced lengths of stay, decreased costs, fewer perioperative complications, better pain control and improved patient satisfaction, especially in rapidly growing services like orthopaedic surgery.

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### The Evolution of Regional Nerve Blocks

Thanks to the aging baby boomer population, the demand for joint replacement surgeries continues to rise. In fact, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that orthopaedic surgeries currently account for a significant portion of the 48 million inpatient surgeries performed annually in the United States. And the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons predicts total hip replacement procedures will continue to rise as much as 50 percent per year, and total knee replacements will increase 300 percent per year through 2030.

Traditionally, major orthopaedic surgery has been linked to a complex array of perioperative morbidities, including:

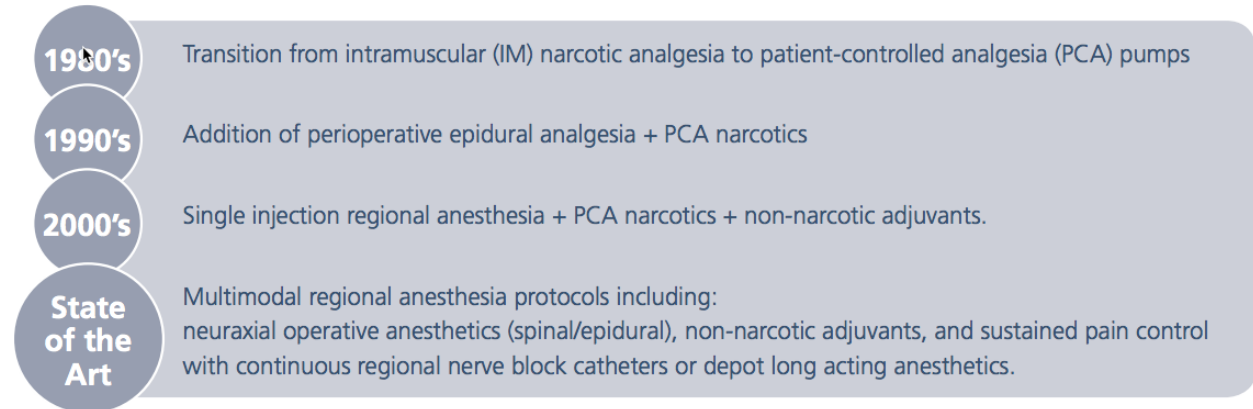
- Pain
- Longer hospitalizations due to older patients
- Increased risk for deep vein thrombosis (DVT), pressure ulcers, pneumonia (related to decreased mobility and narcotics) and hospital-acquired infections
- Narcotic-related complications, including postoperative nausea/vomiting, constipation, post-operative cognitive dysfunction/delirium, urinary retention, itching and drowsiness

Because of these complications, leading orthopaedic surgeons and anesthesiologists began working together to establish advanced pain management protocols that centered on the use of regional anesthesia, also known as regional nerve blocks, as well as the addition of continuous block catheters to achieve maximized post-operative pain control. These small, portable, balloon-

type pumps deliver local anesthetic directly to a patient's surgical site over the course of several days.

What started with single-injection nerve blocks for outpatient orthopaedic surgery has evolved into comprehensive, multimodal analgesic regional nerve block programs.

### Historical Evolution of Regional Anesthesia



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### Regional Anesthesia Revolutionizes Patient Care

The clinical benefits of regional nerve blocks have been closely studied and clearly documented<sup>1</sup>:

- Shorter hospital stays<sup>2,3,4</sup> and as a result, increased throughput
- Reduced PACU<sup>5,6</sup> stays
  - The number #1 and #2 reasons for an extended PACU stay are pain and post-operative nausea/vomiting
- Significantly lower pain scores and better HCAPHS scores
- Reduced post-op cognitive dysfunction/delirium
  - Elderly patients experience up to a 58% decrease in dysfunction/delirium with regional anesthesia compared to use of narcotics.

Patients also experience fewer complications, including DVT, surgical site infections, catheter related urinary tract infections, pneumonia, pressure ulcers, constipation/ileus, nausea/vomiting and postoperative respiratory depression.

In addition, one of the biggest game changers for orthopaedic surgery is the ability to start earlier rehabilitation. This is resulting in significantly improved surgical outcomes, including increased range of motion, gait and balance. In a study of total knee arthroplasty (TKA) patients, regional nerve blocks resulted in<sup>7</sup>:

- Initiation of therapy within 24 hrs of surgery (vs. 48 and 72 hours for the control group)
- Shorter hospital stays
- Fewer inpatient rehab sessions overall

- Less pain
  - Greater range of motion in flexion and extension
  - Improved strength in quads and hamstrings
  - Higher scores on assessments of gait and balance
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## The Economic Benefits

### Inpatient Care Savings

Beyond the clinical benefits, regional anesthesia programs positively impact the bottom line. Two of the most common surgical procedures performed in the U.S., total knee and hip arthroplasty, account for the single greatest Medicare procedural expenditure. A landmark study from the Mayo Clinic demonstrated the implementation of a total joint regional anesthesia program **significantly reduced estimated mean direct hospital costs by an average of \$1,999 per case when compared with controls:**<sup>8</sup>

- Increased savings in ASA 3/4 patients
- A significant reduction in hospital-based (Medicare Part A costs) accounted for the majority of the total cost savings.

Cost savings with regional anesthesia are typically achieved through better patient outcomes and fewer interventions, and the resulting lower overall medical supply costs as well as a significant reduction in hospital length of stay. These savings are found in a number of ways:

- 1.2 day length of stay (LOS) reduction (average hospital's cost per day for a surgical patient = \$1,6579)
- Lower opioid usage and as a result, lower opioid-related adverse effects
- Fewer medical interventions, resulting in lower medical supply costs (urinary catheters, NG tubes, fluids, medications, lab draws)
- Reduced PACU stays

<sup>8</sup>Duncan, CM, Hall Long, K, Warner, DO, Hebl, JR. "The Economic Implications of a Multimodal Analgesic Regimen for Patients Undergoing Major Orthopedic Surgery - A Comparative Study of Direct Costs." Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine. July 2009.

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## Outpatient Care Savings

### Cost Comparison of General vs. Regional Anesthesia for Orthopaedic Outpatient Cases<sup>13</sup>

	General Anesthesia		Regional Anesthesia/ Nerve Block	
	Admission Rate	Associated Cost	Admission Rate	Associated Cost
<b>PACU Admissions</b>	100%	\$1,260,000	18%	\$226,800
<b>Unplanned Hospital Admissions</b>	17%	\$1,960,350	4%	\$46,200
<b>TOTAL COST</b>		<b>\$1,456,350</b>		<b>\$273,000</b>

**SAVINGS with Regional Anesthesia = \$1.2 million**

Chart represents an annual caseload of 3,000. Based on median hospital cost of \$3,500 per patient. Regional anesthesia patients received no volatile anesthetics.

### Additional Benefits: Achieving Market Leadership

Not only is patient satisfaction critical to healthcare reform initiatives and reimbursement, it is a true differentiator and can lead to significant competitive advantage in the local marketplace. And one of the key benefits of regional anesthesia programs -- pain control -- plays one of the most powerful roles in achieving strong patient satisfaction scores.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey has emerged as the gold standard for measuring patient satisfaction and asks patients specific questions related to the quality of their pain management during their hospital stay. Questions include:

- **During this hospital stay, how often was your pain well controlled?**
- **During this hospital stay, how often did the hospital staff do everything they could to help you with your pain?**
- **Would you recommend this hospital to your friends and family?**

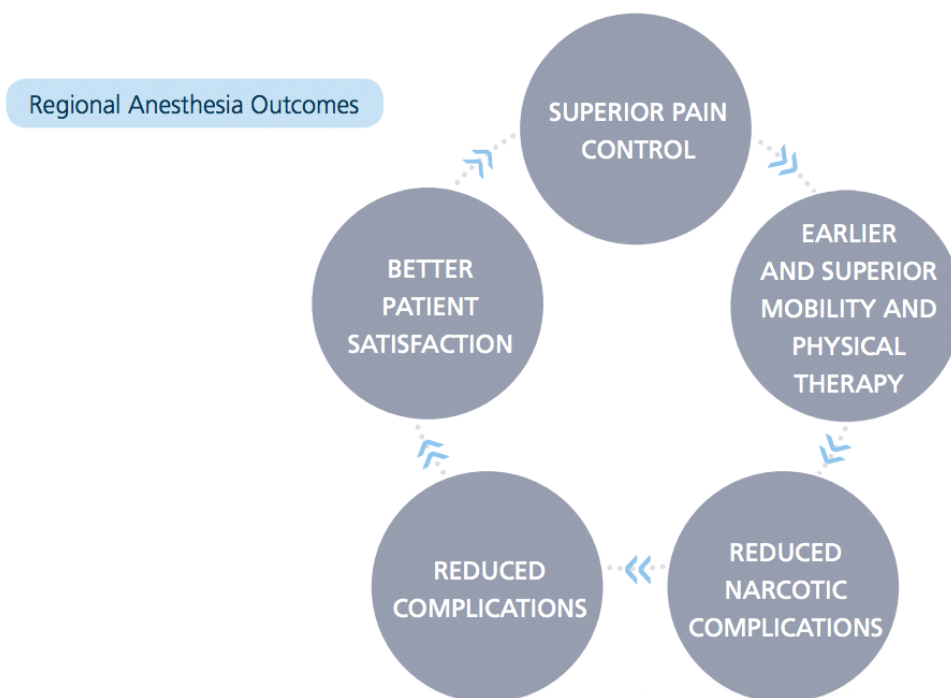
Healthcare systems throughout the country are finding that regional anesthesia protocols positively impact their HCAHPS scores<sup>10,11,12</sup>. In fact, according to Healthgrades, a leading online resource for information about physicians and hospitals, hospitals with the top 15 percent of HCAHPS scores had 26 percent more patients reporting pain well controlled than the bottom 15 percent.

In addition to improved post-surgical pain management and patient satisfaction, regional anesthesia also increases the number of surgeries that can be performed due to improved throughput and increased capacity as well as facilitating inpatient cases to outpatient.

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### Creating Value

It has been said that the problem hospitals face today is not so much one of costs but one of value. And value encompasses outcomes as well as costs.<sup>9</sup> Regional anesthesia programs and the improved patient outcomes, satisfaction and cost savings they bring add value and present hospitals with an opportunity to stay ahead of the curve and position themselves as true market leaders in the new healthcare economy.



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### About U.S. Anesthesia Partners

U.S. Anesthesia Partners is a single-specialty physician services organization that offers practice management to anesthesiologists. It was formed by JLR Medical Group and other leading anesthesia practices to create a platform with the capital resources and expertise to invest in their practice support infrastructure and position them for continued success and growth within their markets. Key elements of USAP's business model are its single-specialty focus and its ability to offer anesthesiologists equity ownership in USAP. USAP and its affiliates have more than 1,200 anesthesia providers serving three major metropolitan markets. USAP is sponsored by Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe, an investment firm with significant experience investing in and building leading healthcare companies. Please visit [www.usap.com](http://www.usap.com) to learn more.

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