

The Development of a Plastic Surgery Supply Cart: Patient Outcomes and Quality of Care

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OBJECTIVE

The plastic surgery team is responsible for treating patients in all hospital locations. Laceration repairs, wound care, and splint application all require supplies that are available throughout the hospital; however, these supplies needed by plastic surgery are not immediately available and must be ordered from the surgical center or central supply. This leads to delays in patient care that are often exacerbated by miscommunications with those delivering supplies. A supply cart was developed at our institution to improve the availability of supplies for the plastic surgery team and to reduce the time to treat patients.

METHODS

Forty consecutive patients, treated by a single physician, were included in this prospective study. The “time to treatment” for each patient, with and without the plastic cart, was recorded. Data from each group were then compared to assess for treatment time reduction. The types of procedures performed were also recorded.

RESULTS

A total of 40 patients were treated. Head and neck procedures were performed in the 24 of 40 patients. Hand procedures were performed in the remaining 16 of 40 patients. Utilization of the cart resulted in a mean “time

to treatment” of 3 minutes 48 seconds compared with a mean “time to treatment” without the cart of 51 minutes ($P < 0.001$). The longest “time to treatment” using the cart was 9 minutes 30 seconds. The longest “time to treatment” without the cart was 3 hours.

CONCLUSION

Utilization of a plastic surgery supply cart greatly reduces the time to treatment. This improves hospital resource utilization and patient workflow.

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