



Original Research Article

ASSESSING PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH ENHANCED RECOVERY AFTER SURGERY (ERAS) PROTOCOLS IN ELECTIVE CESAREAN

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ABSTRACT

Background: Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) is a multimodal and patient-centered perioperative treatment approach. It helps in providing improved surgical and clinical results in the short duration of hospital stay. The ERAS protocol was later adopted worldwide in different surgical specialties due to its positive results. Surgeons, nurses, anesthesiologists, and other healthcare workers follow a multidisciplinary team approach by implementing ERAS. They coordinate care throughout all the surgical phases from the first preoperative consultation till the time when the patient returns to normal daily activities. The main objectives of implementing ERAS is to achieve less hospital stays, reduce readmissions, improve patient satisfaction, and reduce surgical complications. **Objective:** Implementing Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocol to assess the satisfaction of the females undergoing elective c-sections. **Study design:** A descriptive cross-sectional research. **Duration and place of study:** This study was conducted at Indus Medical College Hospital Tando Muhammad Khan from January 2025 to January 2026.

Materials and Methods: This research was conducted in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the hospital. All the patients of this study (n=80) were women who were undergoing elective cesarean sections under spinal anaesthesia. All the patients were divided into 2 groups having equal number of patients in each group. Group A was the ERAS group and group B was the conventional (non-ERAS) group. Group A received a detailed leaflet explaining the ERAS protocols while group B received routine perioperative information during the antenatal visit. Patients in group A were admitted 8 hours before surgery while group B was admitted one day before the surgery. All the patients received spinal anaesthesia with 0.5% heavy bupivacaine along with standard monitoring. The infection was prevented using abdominal cleansing with 4% chlorhexidine followed by betadine. SPSS version 26 was used to analyse the data. A significant p-value was known to be less than 0.05.

Results: There were a total of 80 female patients involved in this study who were divided into 2 groups of equal number of patients (n=40 in each group). Significant difference was seen between both the groups in terms of hospital stay and pain scores. The majority of the patients in both the groups were from the age group of 20 to 25 years. 65% of the patients in group A achieved catheter removal within 6 to 9 hours of the surgery while it was only 5% in group B during this period. 22.5% of patients started breastfeeding within 6 hours of surgery in the ERAS group. A higher number of patients in group A were satisfied with their surgery as compared to group B.

Conclusion: Overall, 57.5% of the patients in the ERAS group strongly agreed to be satisfied regarding the surgical experiences and their recovery as compared to only 12.5% of the patients in the non-ERAS group.

Keywords: Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS), surgical and clinical results, c-section procedure, spinal anaesthesia.

INTRODUCTION

Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) is a multimodal and patient-centered perioperative treatment approach. It helps in providing improved surgical and clinical results in the short duration of hospital stay.^[1] Henrik Kehlet was the pioneer of ERAS who thought about postoperative mobility restriction and prolonged fasting.^[2] He classified the traditional protocol of surgery into various phases such as preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative. This was done due to increasing surgical burden and it helped the patients as well as surgeons in terms of reduced hospital stays.^[3]

The ERAS protocol was later adopted worldwide in different surgical specialties due to its positive results.^[4] Although, according to each specialty, very little adjustments were made. Still, it showed effective results.^[5] Surgeons, nurses, anaesthesiologists, and other healthcare workers follow a multidisciplinary team approach by implementing ERAS. They coordinate care throughout all the surgical phases from the first preoperative consultation till the time when the patient returns to normal daily activities. The rate of c-section is very high in the private and public hospitals of Pakistan as well as neighbouring countries.^[6] Therefore, it is important to implement ERAS in c-section deliveries to achieve improved results, reduce hospital stay, and enhance perioperative care. The main objectives of implementing ERAS is to achieve less hospital stays, reduce readmissions, improve patient satisfaction, and reduce surgical complications.^[7]

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists also supports ERAS.^[8] It has developed its own guidelines for obstetric care which include elements such as subcuticular suture use, delayed cord clamping, and early removal of the urinary catheter. The main components of the Enhanced Recovery After Cesarean (ERAC), which is ERAS principal applied for obstetric patients, are the following; preoperative patient counselling and education, patient medical optimisation, proper balance of diet and fluid, prevention of hypothermia and hypotension during spinal anaesthesia, prophylactic antibiotics during surgery, early mobilisation, multimodal analgesia, early catheter removal, venous thromboembolism prophylaxis, early bowel mobilisation, and planning for early discharge.^[9]

Researchers successfully introduced an enhanced recovery strategy in an exploratory trial in their obstetric unit.^[10] The observation was that the majority of the patients were discharged earlier

along with better satisfaction care and there was no increase in readmission rate. Several changes to traditional care were required to implement this approach for women who underwent elective c-section procedure. Patients were given carbohydrate drinks 2 hours before the surgery instead of the usual overnight fasting. This was done to maintain energy levels. Rather than giving large amounts of intravenous fluids (causes bloating and discomfort after surgery), proper fluid balance was maintained to improve fluid management. These strategies help reduce surgical stress while maintaining anabolic homeostasis.

ERAS protocols are widely used worldwide in many surgical specialties.^[11] However, the implementation of ERAS is still limited, especially in obstetrics and gynaecology. There is a gap that needs to be filled by conducting more studies on evaluating the effect of ERAS on maternal outcomes, patient satisfaction in c-sections and recovery time. Therefore, this study was performed on females who were undergoing elective c-sections and their satisfaction was evaluated by implementing ERAS protocol.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a descriptive cross-sectional research which was conducted in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the hospital. There were a total of 80 patients included in this study. All the patients of this study were women who were undergoing elective cesarean sections under spinal anaesthesia. Patients' informed written consent was obtained. The approval was taken from the Ethical Review Committee of the institute.

Exclusion Criteria: Females who required emergency c-section were excluded. Moreover, women who had comorbid conditions such as heart disease, diabetes mellitus, preeclampsia, or obesity were also not a part of this study. Furthermore, women who experienced any immediate complications in the intraoperative or postoperative phase, who needed general anesthesia, and the ones who required longer hospital stays were also excluded.

All the patients were divided into 2 groups having equal number of patients in each group. Group A was the ERAS group (n=40) and group B was the conventional (non-ERAS) group (n=40). Group A received a detailed leaflet explaining the ERAS protocols including the preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative care. On the other hand, group B received routine perioperative information during the antenatal visit. On the day of discharge, data was collected from the patients using interviews and a

structured questionnaire along with follow-up questions which were asked on the 7th postoperative day. Multiple references were used to develop the ERAS protocol.

Patients in group A were admitted 8 hours before surgery. They were instructed to shower on the day when they were admitted and re-briefed about the procedure. Their pre-anaesthesia evaluation was completed the day before surgery. They were instructed to have soft food for up to 6 hours and clear liquids up to 2 hours before surgery. This avoids prolonged fasting. For carbohydrate loading, 200 cc of black tea with 2 teaspoons of sugar was given 2 hours before the surgery, and metoclopramide was administered for nausea prevention. On the other hand, group B was admitted one day before the surgery and underwent routine laboratory tests and anaesthesia fitness evaluation. They remained nil per oral for 9 to 10 hours overnight before surgery.

All the patients received spinal anaesthesia with 0.5% heavy bupivacaine along with standard monitoring. The infection was prevented using abdominal cleansing with 4% chlorhexidine followed by betadine. Group A followed a minimal fluid policy by maintaining normothermia (20–24 °C) and receiving multimodal analgesia with NSAIDs, regional techniques, and paracetamol. Group B received paracetamol, NSAIDs, and narcotic analgesia. After the surgery, group A

patients started enteral feeding after 2 hours. Their soft diet was started after 4 hours of surgery, and early mobilisation after 3 to 4 hours of surgery. Moreover, Foley catheter removal was done after 6 to 8 hours of surgery and their discharge was planned on the first postoperative day. Group B patients started feeding after 6 to 7 hours of surgery and the catheter removal was done after 8 to 10 hours of surgery, followed by mobilisation. The hospital stay was 2 days.

SPSS version 26 was used to analyse the data. The variables were calculated through t-test and chi-square test. A significant p-value was known to be less than 0.05.

RESULTS

There were a total of 80 female patients involved in this study. All the patients were divided into 2 groups having equal number of patients in each group. Group A was the ERAS group (n=40) and group B was the conventional (non-ERAS) group (n=40). Table number 1 compares a few parameters between both the groups. There was a significant difference seen between both the groups in terms of hospital stay and pain scores at 10th and 20th hours. However, no significant difference was seen between both the groups in terms of BMI (p = 0.176).

Table 1: ?

Parameters	Group A (ERAS group)	Group B (non-ERAS group)	p-value
Duration of stay (hrs)	33.9 ± 8.2	61.6 ± 10.5	<0.001
BMI	24.7 ± 3.48	25.7 ± 3.4	0.176
Pain at 10th hrs	5.03 ± 1.8	6.71 ± 1.7	<0.001
Pain at 20th hrs	2.36 ± 1.1	4.41 ± 1.7	<0.001

Table number 2 compares the demographic, clinical, and postoperative variables between both the groups. The majority of the patients in both the groups were from the age group of 20 to 25 years. The majority of the patients in group A achieved catheter removal within 6 to 9 hours of the surgery.

However, it was done after 14 to 17 hours in group B (non-ERAS group). In the ERAS group, breastfeeding was started within 6 hours of surgery (22.5%) while only 1 patient started breastfeeding in the non-ERAS group within this period.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic, Hormonal and Biochemical Parameters in Cases and Controls

Variables	Group A (ERAS group)		Group B (non-ERAS group)	
	N	%	N	%
Age (yrs)				
• 20 to 25	15	37.5	13	32.5
• 26 to 30	13	32.5	13	32.5
• 31 to 35	9	22.5	10	25.0
• 36 to 40	2	5.0	4	10.0
• 41 to 45	1	2.5	0	0.0
Indication				
• Previous 1 scar	12	30.0	14	35.0
• Previous 2 scar	12	30.0	11	27.5
• Previous 3 scar	1	2.5	7	17.5
• Breech baby	8	20.0	2	5.0
• Wish for c-section	2	5.0	2	5.0
• Large size baby	3	7.5	3	7.5
• Intrauterine dead baby	2	5.0	1	2.5
Gravida Parity				
• Multigravida	29	72.5	34	85.0
• Primigravida	11	27.5	6	15.0

Breast Feeding (hrs)				
• 0 to 6	9	22.5	1	2.5
• 7 to 12	24	60.0	16	40.0
• 13 to 18	6	15.0	14	35.0
• >18	1	2.5	9	22.5
Catheter Removal (hrs)				
• 6 to 9	26	65.0	2	5.0
• 10 to 13	13	32.5	3	7.5
• 14 to 17	1	2.5	23	57.5
• >17	0	0.0	12	30.0
Nausea at 10th hrs				
• Mild	3	7.5	10	25.0
• None	37	92.5	30	75.0
Nausea at 10th hrs				
• Mild	1	2.5	2	5.0
• None	39	97.5	38	95.0
Gestational Age (weeks)				
• 37	7	17.5	1	2.5
• 38	33	82.5	35	87.5
• 39	0	0.0	4	10.0
Temperature at 20th hrs				
• Mild	0	0.0	1	2.5
• None	40	100.0	39	97.5
Urine problems at 20th hrs				
• Mild	0	0.0	7	17.5
• None	40	100.0	33	82.5

Table number 3 shows the patient satisfaction and postoperative experiences. A higher number of

patients in group A were satisfied with their surgery as compared to group B.

Table 3:

Variables	Group A (ERAS group)		Group B (non-ERAS group)	
	N	%	N	%
Proper education regarding the procedure was given before the surgery?				
• Strongly agree	30	75.0	10	25.0
• Agree	9	22.5	0	0.0
• Uncertain	1	2.5	5	12.5
• Disagree	0	0.0	12	30.0
• Strongly disagree	0	0.0	13	32.5
Any urinary complaints after surgery?				
• Strongly agree	1	2.5	2	5.0
• Agree	5	12.5	11	27.5
• Uncertain	6	15.0	0	0.0
• Disagree	17	42.5	9	22.5
• Strongly disagree	11	27.5	18	45.0
Postoperative nausea/vomiting?				
• Strongly agree	2	5.0	3	7.5
• Agree	3	7.5	8	20.0
• Uncertain	7	17.5	1	2.5
• Disagree	16	40.0	21	52.5
• Strongly disagree	12	30.0	7	17.5
Satisfied with postoperative pain control?				
• Strongly agree	14	35.0	3	7.5
• Agree	10	25.0	8	20.0
• Uncertain	5	12.5	11	27.5
• Disagree	6	15.0	14	35.0
• Strongly disagree	5	12.5	4	10.0
Satisfied with surgery experience?				
• Strongly agree	23	57.5	5	12.5
• Agree	9	22.5	19	47.5
• Uncertain	6	15.0	8	20.0
• Disagree	0	0.0	2	5.0
• Strongly disagree	2	5.0	6	15.0
Visit to doctor				
• Strongly agree	3	7.5	0	0.0
• Agree	5	12.5	5	12.5
• Uncertain	0	0.0	4	10.0
• Disagree	16	40.0	8	20.0
• Strongly disagree	16	40.0	23	57.7
Readmission				
• Strongly agree	1	2.5	0	0.0

• Agree	2	5.0	1	2.5
• Uncertain	3	7.5	0	0.0
• Disagree	16	40.0	9	22.5
• Strongly disagree	18	45.0	30	75.0

DISCUSSION

The concept of Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) was found in the 1990s. Yet, the implementation of ERAS is still limited, especially in obstetrics and gynaecology.^[12] There is a gap that needs to be filled by conducting more studies on evaluating the effect of ERAS on maternal outcomes, patient satisfaction in c-sections and recovery time. To address this gap, we conducted this study on 80 female patients who underwent elective c-section by using ERAS protocol. They were divided into 2 groups of equal number of patients (n=40 in each group).

Over the past 10 years, a number of obstetrical units around the world have reported higher patient satisfaction, enhanced service quality, and significant cost savings. Cherot observed that this method helps patients get more ready surgically.^[13] Researchers have conducted their study on assessing the level of satisfaction the patients are having after ERAS-compliant c-section deliveries.^[14-17] Based on their study findings, the majority of the patients were satisfied with their c-section deliveries. An author observed that Pakistani surgeons find difficulty in the implementation of ERAS in different surgeries.^[18] Our current study showed that if ERAS is implemented properly, it shows a higher rate of patient satisfaction after elective c-section delivery.

In our findings, significant differences were seen between both the groups in terms of hospital stay and pain scores. The hospital stay of the ERAS group was 33.9 ± 8.2 hours while it was 61.6 ± 10.5 hours in the non-ERAS group. There was no significant difference seen between both the groups in terms of BMI ($p = 0.176$). According to Pan et al., the total hospital stay, anesthesia cost, and postoperative duration of stay were similar in both the groups.^[19] This finding is in counter with our results. Overall, 60% of our patients in the ERAS group (group A) were satisfied with the postoperative pain control as compared to only 27.5% from group B. The majority of the patients were satisfied with the overall surgery experience in group A (57.5% strongly agreed) while only 12.5% of the patients strongly agreed in group B.

The study of Gupta S. observed post-operative pain control, length of stay, use of analgesia, and quality of life after c-section by comparing ERAS implementation with standard post-operative care.^[20] They reported that the majority of the patients had excellent or very good pain management after the surgery.

There are a few limitations of this study. The first limitation is that non-probability sampling was used, which was ideal for our study sample and design. It

was used because our exclusion and inclusion criteria were stringent. Secondly, it was a single center-based study which limits generalizability due to the use of non-probability sampling methods.

CONCLUSION

Overall, 57.5% of the patients in the ERAS group strongly agreed to be satisfied regarding the surgical experiences and their recovery as compared to only 12.5% of the patients in the non-ERAS group.

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This study was conducted without receiving financial support from any external source.

Conflict in the interest

The authors had no conflict related to the interest in the execution of this study.

Permission

Prior to initiating the study, approval from the ethical committee was obtained to ensure adherence to ethical standards and guidelines.

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