

Performing New Procedures and Adopting New Technologies

Question

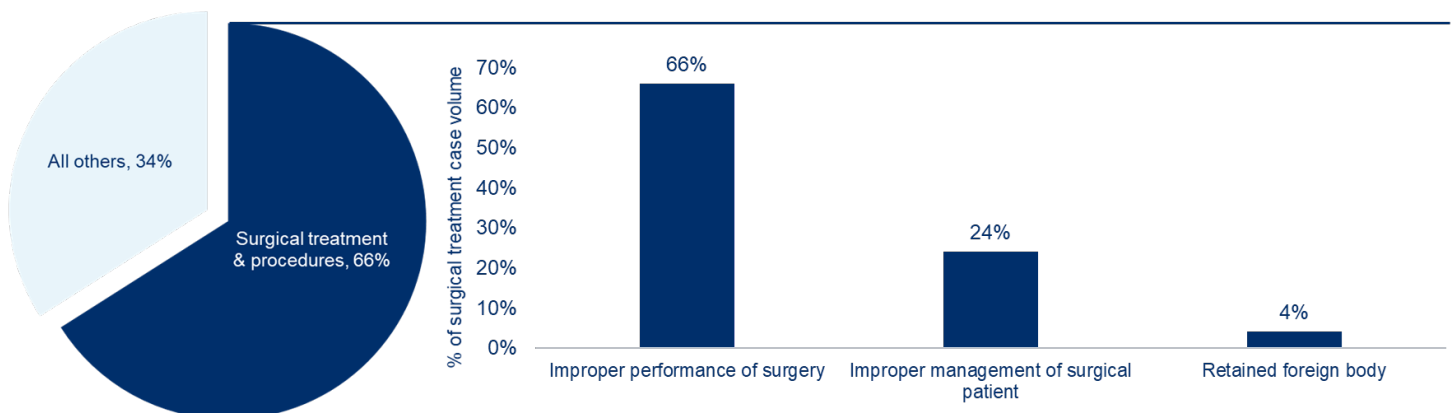
How can healthcare organizations ensure clinicians are properly prepared to perform new procedures and adopt new technologies?

Answer

Experts are rapidly developing new procedures and technologies. Clinicians who plan to use these techniques must be properly trained and prepared to implement them, or they might jeopardize patient safety and increase their liability exposure.

MedPro Group claims analysis shows that procedural performance represents a risk issue in malpractice allegations. For example, ambulatory surgery claims data indicate that within surgical treatment and procedure allegations — which account for 66 percent of all ambulatory surgery claims — issues related to the performance of surgery are the most prevalent (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Ambulatory Surgery Case Volume by Allegation Category and Subcategory



Source: MedPro Group + MLMIC ambulatory surgery cases opened between 2012–2021; more than one allegation subcategory may be coded per case, and therefore totals are greater than 100 percent.

Using new innovations may require developing new, enhanced, or more complex skill sets — and varying levels of education and training might be necessary to obtain proficiency. Medical specialty organizations, educational institutions, and other entities (including device manufacturers) in the healthcare industry offer various training programs; clinicians should review each program to determine its substance and value.

Further, healthcare organizations might require additional privileging, focused professional practice evaluation (FPPE), proctoring, mentorship programs, preceptorships, surgical coaching, or other processes prior to allowing clinicians to perform new procedures or use new technologies.

Each healthcare organization should have (a) a method to determine the technical and cognitive skill sets required for the procedures it offers, (b) written policies and protocols related to mandatory training expectations and oversight requirements, and (c) well-defined processes for assessing clinician competency.

Although a one-size-fits-all approach to performing new procedures or adopting new technologies is not realistic, the following risk management strategies can help:

- Contact your professional liability insurer to verify coverage of the new procedure/technology.
- Join or form a collaborative group with other practitioners performing the same type of procedure or using the same technology.
- Take advantage of manufacturer-supplied training when possible, but be aware that additional training might be necessary to ensure competency.
- Adhere to organizational policies related to preceptorships, proctoring, surgical coaching, and other training requirements.
- Acclimate staff members to the new procedure/technology with education and training.
- Realize your limitations and be realistic about your scope of expertise.
- Be prepared to disclose relevant information about the new procedure/technology during informed consent discussions, including an evidence-based presentation of potential risks, benefits, and alternatives without any marketing bias from manufacturers. Provide clear and specific information, and give the patient educational handouts.

- Disclose your level of experience to your patients, especially if you are on the early or steep part of a learning curve. If you're considering using a proctor or preceptor, disclose that information as well during informed consent discussions.
- Ensure associated equipment and supplies are readily available.
- Use templates to ensure complete documentation.
- Verify that your practice has the ability and appropriate protocol in place to bill patients.

Resources

- [Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons: Guidelines for the Introduction of New Technology and Techniques](#)
- [The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: Guiding Principles for Privileging of Innovative Procedures in Gynecologic Surgery](#)
- [The Joint Commission: Focused Professional Practice Evaluation \(FPPE\) — Understanding the Requirements](#)

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