

# Post-Operative Period and its Phases

Pieter J Tanis\*

Department of Surgery, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

## Overview

The post-operative period begins from the time the patient leaves the operating room and ends with follow up visit by the surgeon. Postoperative period begins after surgery is done and your healthcare provider should teach you about the potential side effects and complications of your procedure.

The post-operative care is provided by Post Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU) and Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU).

The main purpose of post-operative period is:

- To empower an effective and quicker recovery of the patient post operatively.
- To reduce post-operative mortality rate.
- To reduce the length of the hospital stay of the patient.
- To provide quality care service.
- To lessen clinic and patient expenses during post-operative period.

## Post Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

Patients still under anaesthesia or recovering from anaesthesia are placed in the unit for observation by high skilled nurses, anaesthetist and surgeon. Post Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU) ought to be sound proof, painted in delicate shading, isolated and these features will help the patient to reduce tension and enhances the patient comfort.

In the Post Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU) nurse oversees care for patients who are awakening from sedation. They basically work in the post-sedation care unit of emergency clinics and monitor a patient's vital signs, check their level of consciousness after giving anaesthesia, and look for any side effects from sedation.

## Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU)

Surgical Intensive Care is a specialty of intensive care related to the care and treatment of patients who are seriously or critically sick after a medical procedure.

Onsite 24 hours per day, the group includes specialists, anaesthesiologists, critical care nurses, respiratory therapists and many other different trained professionals. People treated at the SICU have an assortment of conditions.

Hypothermia, hypertension, hypotension and respiratory insufficiency are the most commonly encountered post-operative problems in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU). They affect most patients subjected to prolonged surgery or massive trauma.

*\*Address for Correspondence: Pieter J. Tanis, Department of Surgery, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands; E- mail: p.j.taniss@amsterdamumc.nl*

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## Phases of Post-Operative Period

They are three types of post-operative phases

1. Immediate (post anaesthetic)
2. Intermediate (hospital stay)
3. Convalescent (after discharge to full recovery)

Phase-1: It is the immediate recovery phase and requires concentrated nursing care to distinguish early indications of complications. It is designated for care of surgical patient immediately after medical procedure and patient requiring regular monitoring. In this complete information from patient should be taken from the operating room to plan post-operative care.

The most common complications include:

- Shock is an extreme drop in pulse that causes a dangerous slowing of blood flow throughout the body
- Bleeding
- Wound infection
- Deep vein thrombosis
- Pneumonic embolism
- Lung issues
- Urinary maintenance
- Reaction to anaesthesia

Phase- 2: This phase is also known as step down or progressive care unit. In this phase care of the surgical patient who has been transferred from the phase 1 post-operative unit. Patient requires less observation and less care than phase-1.

Some of the healthcare-associated infections are;

- Urinary tract infection.
- Surgical site infection.
- Pneumonia.
- Blood stream disease.
- Infections or inflammatory complications associated with peripheral/central venous catheters.
- Multi-resistant organism.
- Infection associated with prosthetics/implantable devices.
- Gastrointestinal infections.

Phase- 3: Convalescent phase is the gradual recovery of health and strength after illness or injury. It refers to the later phase of an infectious disease or sickness when the patient recovers and gets back to previous health.

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