Surgery in the new millenium— all in a day’s work.

Davide Lomanto*, McArthur Conrado A. Salonga, Jr., Henry C. Chua, (*Director, Minimally Invasive Surgical Centre, National University Hospital, Singapore.)

Continued & Concluded from last issue......

global acceptance of ambulatory surgery as a highly favored option. Day surgery has proven to be beneficial to and accepted by both patients and the medical faculties. It is a win-win situation for both parties trying to cope with the changing times and ever renewing standards of medicine for less invasive, cost-effective, and complication-free therapy, that’s all in a day’s work.

References:

Development of Day Surgery in Italy.

Coda Andrea*

(*Consultant Surgeon, Member of the Board of the Italian Society for Ambulatory and Day Surgery. President of the 27th International Congress of the European Hernia Society, Dept. of Surgery, Presidio Sanitario Gradeno, Torino, Italy.)

The concept of Day Surgery in Italy was first put to use in the late '80s at the Children's Hospital, “Bambin Gesu”, in Rome, close to the Vatican City. The project had a very good outcome and was extended to adult care, but still as an individual initiative.

Being a pioneer in prosthetic inguinal hernia repair under local anaesthesia (1), allowed patients early ambulation and oral intake; and a pain free post operative period; staying in the hospital for a week was unacceptable. Whereas, the trend in the country was a hospital stay of eight days for inguinal hernia repair! However, I couldn’t go against the “common sense” of that age. Therefore, my patients experienced a strange kind of ‘holiday’: playing cards, chattering, watching football matches and movies together.

In 1995, the Italian Society for Ambulatory and Day Surgery (SICADS) was founded, primarily to promote the scientific basis of this innovative way of care. The 1st National Congress was held in Milan in January 1997. My presentation was “The Ambulatory Surgery, between mirage and reality” (2), an apt title for that time.

Finally, for less than 48 hours stay in the hospital, only 40% of the expense was reimbursed by medical insurance.
Therefore, the hospital administration had no advantage promoting Day Case Surgery (DCS).

But the patients stay of two nights, admitted the day before surgery and discharged the day after, was a big progress, compared to the eight days of earlier years.

In 1999, due to government pressure, hospitals were forced to perform 70% of cases, in some pathology, in DCS, but to reduce costs for public administration, these cases reimbursed at 80%.

In 2001, finally government did the more obvious and wanting thing: stated that DCS would include a stay in the hospital of less than 24 hours: as One Day Surgery (ODS), or without overnight, as Day Surgery (DS). 80% of surgical cases, like inguinal hernia, would be treated this way. Therefore, hospital stay of longer than 24 hrs, needed a justification; for example: operation for strangulation, associated severe illness, complications, etc. But, staying in hospital longer than 24 hrs, if exceeded 20% of all operated cases, would not be reimbursed.

This year there has been an explosion of the DCS in Italy. Many DCS unit were founded. Since then, the annual National SICADS Congress has been one of the most attended meetings! Encouraging a flourish of regional SICADS meetings.

Any surgeon with five years of experience, or a patient exposed to Day Case Surgery, would always opt for this option of treatment. The government may or may not have saved on expenses, but, surgical care has greatly improved. Over a period of time, a great deal has been discussed, proving Day Case Surgery to be better a modality, not only from a surgical point of view, but, also it has improved over hospital-stay-treatment as a whole.

Our hospital has an independent multidisciplinary Day Surgery unit, which works 12 hrs every day. Patients arrive early in the morning, ready for surgery, having consulted and prepared few days before. Every step is regulated by protocols and rules of the DCS unit. Operations are performed in the morning; then the patient is in observation for a few hours. At 4 pm, the surgeon checks the patient, at 5 pm the anaesthesiologist does the same by her/his point of view and then, by 6 pm, patient is ready to be discharged. If a patient has a problem that can’t be solved promptly, she/he is transferred to inpatient service. The unit is finally closed for the day at 7 pm.

In this way, we have more and more patients asking to be treated in DCS and are particularly satisfied when they hear that it will be possible to perform this particular surgery under LA. This means, in the patients’ eyes, the surgical pathology is not so severe. Therefore, operation will not be difficult and they can be home for dinner with their family.

An Independent multidisciplinary unit is the best way to manage DCS, because if you have some dedicated beds for DCS along with in-door service of General Surgery, then, you will have patients operated for inguinal hernia or varicose veins recouping beside patients with gastrectomy, colectomy or peritonitis, for instance. With the same nurses having to care for both these category of patients. The striking difference of illness will invariably result in more care for operated supra-major cases, causing a lack in the care for DCS patients, making outcome in these patients unfavorable.

Surgery & discharge on same day for:
- Hernia, Ples, Fistula, Fissure, Diabetic foot, Pilonidal sinus, Ingrown toenail
- Lipoma, Sebaceous cyst, Abscess, Circumcision, Vasectomy, D & C, Tubal Ligation, Diagnostic Lap, etc. (In selected cases)

 Extended stay: Appendicit, Gall stones, Hystrectomy, etc.

Other Surgeries related to: Paediatric, Urology, Plastic, ENT, Vascular, Chemotherapy & related treatment. (Please take prior appointment).

Concluding part, to be continued, in the next issue......