

Postop Follow-Up By Phone Safe, Efficient

Charles Bankhead

Telephone follow-up after ambulatory surgery proved acceptable to most patients, saved time and money, and was associated with few complications, investigators in a pilot program reported.

Three-fourths of patients contacted by telephone after hernia repair or laparoscopic cholecystectomy accepted the contact as the sole means of follow-up. The "telehealth" follow-up by an allied health professional saved patients trips that ranged in distance from 7 to 866 miles, and time saved at the clinic was used to schedule additional appointments.

Three of 63 (4.8%) herniorrhaphy patients had complications, only one of which was considered serious: an incisional hematoma, which eventually required inpatient management, as reported online in JAMA Surgery.

"This pilot study demonstrated that a scripted telehealth visit by an allied health professional can be safely and effectively used for the postoperative care of open herniorrhaphy and laparoscopic cholecystectomy patients," Sherry M. Wren, MD, and Kimberly Hwa, MMA, PA-C, of Stanford University concluded.

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