

A BUYER'S GUIDE

to Orthopedic Patient-Reported
Outcome Collection Tools

OrthoServiceLine



1

Introduction

2

The importance of collecting functional outcomes

3

Deciding what to measure

6

Meeting your data needs

7

Reporting capabilities

8

The right solution

OrthoServiceLine would like to thank the following expert contributors:

Kevin J. Bozic, MD, MBA, Chair of the Department of Surgery and Perioperative Care, and Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, at the Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin

Nina Whalen, RN, APN-C, manager of clinical outcomes at OrthoIndy Hospital

Patricia D. Franklin, MD, MBA, MPH, Professor and Executive Director of Outcomes Research, Musculoskeletal Service at the University of Massachusetts Medical School



As a result of healthcare reform in the U.S., medical professionals face increasing pressure to track both quality and value in patient care. From physician reporting requirements to bundled payment plans, providers often find that there is money on the line when it comes to proving the value of care that they provide. Without the right tools, orthopedic programs may experience decreased reimbursement.

Patient reported outcomes (PROs) are an important resource that can help meet these requirements. PROs measure the function and pain that a patient experiences before and after surgery. Because the timing of orthopedic procedures are typically self-elected by patients to improve their quality of life, these metrics are especially important in determining whether surgery has successfully eliminated pain and restored range of motion.

It may be difficult to discern which PRO measurement tools will serve your orthopedic program best. This guide is designed to help you understand why PROs support a healthy program, and identify what you will measure.

The importance of collecting functional outcomes

Collecting functional outcomes from your patients can provide a number of benefits to your orthopedic program.

- ➔ **Clinical decision making:** PROs quantify pain and functional limitations to support determining patient need and timing for joint replacement surgery.
- ➔ **Reporting compliance:** Providers must meet an increasing number of reporting requirements when providing care, including the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement Model (CJR), Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) and others. When you collect functional outcomes, you have the evidence that you need to show for these programs. Without that data, you may have trouble receiving reimbursement for procedures.
- ➔ **Data validity:** In order to conduct research for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, or to conduct clinical trials, data must be collected systematically. PRO tools can ensure that the collected data is complete, accurate and relevant.

“Orthopaedic surgeons should measure PROs to facilitate appropriate clinical decision making based on patients’ own report of their pain, functional status, quality of life, preferences, and values.” – Dr. Kevin Bozic

- ➔ **Quality improvement:** Collecting PROs allows your healthcare facility to use the data to continuously improve quality over time. This is an important signal to payers and patients that a provider is committed to high-value care.
- ➔ **Patient safety:** When complications occur or an implant is recalled, health systems must be able to track these issues. PRO tools will help give you additional information surrounding each occurrence. With the right system in place, patients with recalled implants can be identified within hours.

Deciding what to measure



When preparing to collect PROs, you need to make several important decisions to build your own outcomes collection workflow.

First, it is critical to decide which questions are most appropriate for your patients. Surveys have varying lengths and complex scoring mechanisms, which could unnecessarily complicate the system for your patients. Choose the measurements that will

For hip and knee conditions, health systems may consider clinical and functional outcome measures:

Knee injury and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (KOOS)

Hip Disability and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (HOOS)

Oxford Knee Score

Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Arthritis Index (WOMAC)

Harris Hip Score

For quality of life measures, choices such as the VR-12, SF-36, EQ-5D or Patient Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS) may be well-suited for your specific needs.

provide the functional data that you need in a manner appropriate for your patients. Choose measures that are non-proprietary and consider the respondent burden. Computer Adapted Testing (CAT) version of the surveys allow similar validity as full length surveys with fewer questions. (See sidebar)

The timeframes for these measurements should be the next consideration. Though healthcare facilities differ, it is typical in orthopedics for a survey to be taken at pre-surgery, as well as 30, 60, 90, 180 and/or 365 days after the operation. While there is some flexibility, pre-surgery and a one-year post-op are must-haves for your records. Be sure that your PRO tools are flexible enough to deliver the measurements that you need within the time periods that you need them.

Finally, these patient outcome metrics can be collected in a variety of ways, most of which have their own benefits and disadvantages.

- ➔ **Office waiting room:** When patients are waiting for an appointment, the down time is a good opportunity to have them report outcomes on paper or through a computer. However, this method can be somewhat labor-intensive for staff and requires an in-person visit from the patient.
- ➔ **Exam room:** In the exam room, providers can collect data in the presence of a patient. While this may be helpful for patients who struggle with technology use on their own, it requires extra work on the part of the provider, and is another case where the patient must physically come into the office to report the outcomes.

→ **Online:** Collecting PRO metrics through an email delivered to the patient's home can be convenient for patients and providers alike. However, if the patient is not compliant, a staff member will have to follow up by phone or other means.

Two of the most effective ways of ensuring patients complete surveys, however, happen at the beginning of their experience. First, patients are most likely to complete post-operative surveys when they have completed a pre-operative survey. This was reported by the California Joint Replacement Registry (CJRR) in a 2015 article.

Second, when a surgeon explains to patients why surveys matter, they are much more likely to complete those surveys. These factors can boost patient compliance significantly, making data from PROs statistically valid more quickly.

Additionally, collecting patient-reported outcomes in context of a larger patient engagement initiative across the episode can raise completion rates. Be sure you have a comprehensive plan to engage and prepare the patient pre-surgery as well as follow up and mitigate risks post-surgery. A staged approach of in-office collection, direct to home and phone call reminders can increase completion rates.

“Registries are beginning to collect the PRO quality of life measures as a way to show the ‘need’ for the surgical intervention since joint replacement procedures are mostly elective.” – Nina Whalen, RN, APN-C

Meeting your data needs



Before you invest in a PRO collection tool, it is important to evaluate the specific data needs of your healthcare facility. Many important questions center on the system's internal use and require an in-depth conversation with the seller.

Considerations include:

- ➔ *Who owns the completed data after it is submitted by the patient: you or the vendor?*
- ➔ *Are reports produced by you or the vendor? Do you have unlimited access to reports? Can you query to view real-time results?*
- ➔ *Is the PRO collection tool capable of tracking complete data, presenting PROs in the context of an individual surgeon, surgical approach, implant, etc.? This context greatly improves the utility of your data.*

- *Do you need a robust implant manufacturer database included for intraoperative data collection?*
- *Can you benchmark against national standards?*
- *Does the system meet HIPAA requirements, and does it need to interface with your EMR? There are upsides and downsides to involving EMR integration.*

While these are key questions for your vendor, consider your health system's capabilities as well. Is your practice or health system prepared to dedicate a staff member to managing this collection tool, in order to facilitate reporting on-site with surgeons? And, is there a surgeon who will champion the effort and lead a team to act on the quality improvement opportunities you will identify via outcome collection?

Reporting capabilities

Think about national data sets you want to participate in, such as the American Joint Replacement Registry (AJRR) or the Function and Outcomes Research for Comparative Effectiveness in Total Joint Replacement and Quality Improvement (FORCE-TJR), and make sure that your reporting tool will be compatible for meeting those needs. Being able to report quality metrics to Medicare and other payers is also critically important. If the tool that you use to collect the PROs does not allow you to report the information correctly, you will have to put extra time and resources into the process to ensure that the data is delivered. The right PRO tool should make the process simpler - not more complicated.

The right solution



Through determining the measures, timeframe and method of collection, and evaluating your data needs, your orthopedic program can make an informed decision when it comes to the right solution for your PRO collection needs. Based on the unique requirements of your program, this outcomes data can help you to meet reporting requirements, gather data for research, improve performance and track complications, creating a better experience for your staff and patients alike.

3 things to do now

1. Find your physician champion who will lead this effort.
2. Choose which functional measures you will use, timeframes and collection methods.
3. Determine your data needs.



orthoserviceline.com



editor@orthoserviceline.com

OrthoServiceLine



This OrthoServiceLine.com Buyer's Guide is sponsored by Wellbe.

Wellbe PROMs Connect is an easy-to-use cloud-based PRO collection solution that includes patient education and check-ins to engage patients for better outcomes and increased satisfaction. Learn more at www.wellbe.me/proms-connect.

wellbe[™]