

## Evolution of Ambulatory Surgery during my surgical career



**Dr A Ramamurthy**

Former Professor and HOD of Surgery Coimbatore Medical College & Hospital KMCH Institute of Health Sciences & Research. One of the first persons to start Laparoscopy work in India

Ambulatory Surgery is a not new concept in the delivery of Surgical Healthcare system.

It is a positive trendsetter in delivering surgical healthcare to the masses in the present global medical scenario.

It is a transformative model of surgical delivery system. The aim of this model is to operate and discharge the patient on the same day. This model is also called “Day Care Surgery” or “Short Stay Surgery”.

### What is Ambulatory Surgery?

Ambulatory surgery is where the patients are operated and discharged on the same day with or without overnight stay, depending on the comfort of the patient. With the evolution

of Anaesthetic and Surgical techniques the potential for Day Care Surgery has increased over the three decades. The surgical scenario before 90s involved big incisions, painful surgery and prolonged hospital stay. After the 90s, Ambulatory surgery came in and it was done through small keyholes, the post operative period was pain free and the hospital stay was short.

To elaborate upon the above points, we will try to discuss more about changing phase of surgical outcomes. Let us take the example of Gallbladder Surgery. Before 90s, Cholecystectomy was done by open method. We used to make big right paramedian incision or a right sub costal incision to remove the Gallbladder. Nasogastric tube will be inserted before surgery, and it will be kept in position at least for 48 to 72 hours. A corrugated drain will be left in the peritoneal cavity. Patient must be in the hospital for at least one week. After removal of all the above-mentioned tubes and suture removal, the patient will be discharged. Moreover, he will be asked to take rest for at least two weeks before starting his routine work.

After 90s, the scenario changed totally with the advent of Keyhole surgery. Using Laparoscope to visualise the peritoneal cavity, Cholecystectomy was performed through small keyholes.

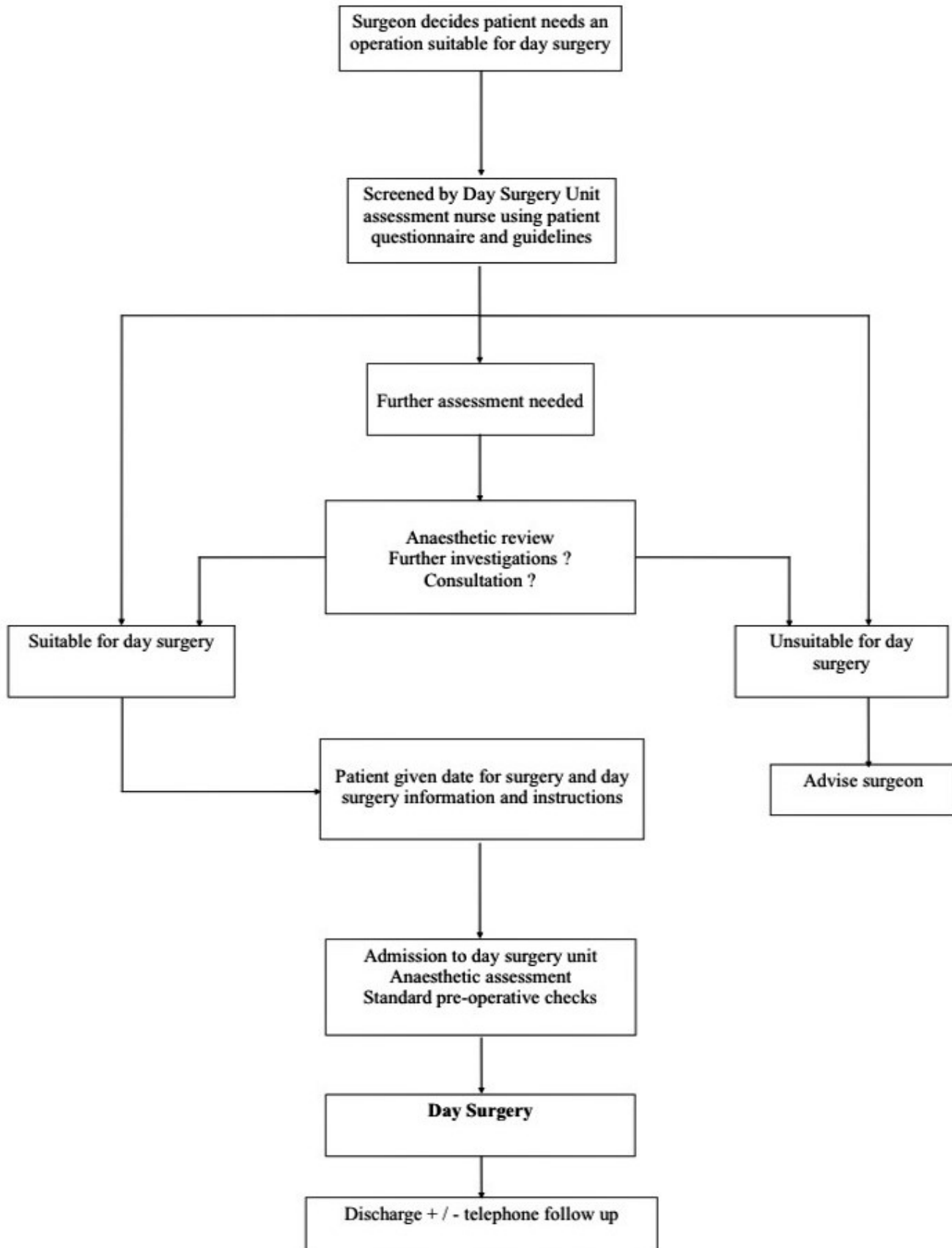
- No nasogastric tube or drains.
- Patient is discharged on the next day and returns to his routine work in 5 days.
- The painful phase of open surgery changed to a smiling, pain free period of Ambulatory surgery.

### What are the important requisites for Ambulatory surgery?

The concept of Ambulatory Surgery needs sophisticated instruments like Laparoscopy, Laser, Staplers and Harmonic Instruments. Apart from equipment, it involves the following aspects -Improved anaesthetic techniques, correct monitoring of the patients and good expertise of the Surgeon and the surgical team. The surgeon must perform the operation skill fully and quickly to ensure that the patient recovers rapidly. The pivotal requisite of this concept is proper selection of the patient.

### What are the General surgical procedures coming under

**Figure 2**  
**Typical Assessment process**





**Table 1: Day Surgery Staff and their roles in information provision**

<i>Primary Care Physician</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduces patient to day surgery</li> <li>- provides introductory general and procedure specific information</li> </ul>
<i>Surgeon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assesses patient for day surgery</li> <li>- advises patient</li> <li>- provides specific information about disease and surgical procedure, what is expected of the patient clinically</li> <li>- obtains informed consent</li> <li>- may perform post-op telephone follow-up</li> </ul>
<i>Anaesthetist</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pre-operative assessment</li> <li>- provides information about what will happen on day of surgery</li> </ul>
<i>Nurse</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- greets and cares for patient at pre-assessment and on day of surgery</li> <li>- builds day surgery rapport with patient</li> <li>- provides information and ensures that relevant information has been transmitted</li> <li>- listens to patient and answers questions</li> </ul>
<i>Administrative Staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- telephone contact, booking and liaison to medical personnel</li> <li>- reference to information</li> <li>- administrative procedures: admission and discharge</li> </ul>

## the purview of Ambulatory Surgery Centres?

Based on number of studies and current practice in India, it can be recommended that many surgeries on carefully selected patients can be conducted on day care basis. Important general surgical procedures are Laser and Stapler treatment for Piles, Lichtenstein repair of Inguinal Hernia, Laparoscopic repair of all types of Hernia and Laparoscopic removal of Appendix and Gallbladder. Nowadays Minimal invasive Thyroid and Breast surgeries are also done under this concept.

## What are the advantages of Ambulatory Surgery?

Ambulatory surgery is assuming a role of increasing importance in the current health politics of cost containment. Easier bed availability, larger patient turnover, early patient mobilisation and decrease in the number of absence days in the work spot are connected to the reduction of costs. Another important aspect of Day Care Surgery is almost no incidence of hospital infection which is an important factor in cost escalation. Patient is psychologically happy to go home early without the necessity to stay long in the hospital.

## Monitoring Quality- Use of Audit and Standards

Audit and subsequent action is of fundamental importance to the successful practice of Ambulatory surgery. Furthermore, failure to establish standards and implement satisfactory monitoring, audit and quality measures will lead to problems for the patients. As we move clinical activity from the inpatient setting to ambulatory surgery, it is important that this clinical activity is monitored and audited to ensure that problems experienced by patients are quickly identified and rectified. The move to ambulatory surgery is probably the biggest change in practice in any health service and requires effective management. If quality is compromised in anyway the patients are affected and it is important that we pick this up and deal with it quickly.

## Summary

Where Day Surgery was once considered as specialised care suitable only for the simplest of procedures and carefully selected patients, it is now seen as treatment of choice for many operations with patients only excluded if there are convincing reasons. So, the medical risks must be plotted against the degree of invasiveness of the surgical procedure: low, medium, or high

intensity procedures and together with the individual fitness of the patient. With the wide variety of safe anaesthetic techniques and the before mentioned widening of selection criteria, we probably can meet the double goal set by the NHS in the UK. In the UK, the NHS and Government are very actively promoting the practice of Day Surgery and they launched the next two goals:

1. Day surgery is the default for surgery
2. 75% or procedures should be performed as Day surgery cases.

## Reference:

Day Surgery Handbook by International Association for Ambulatory Surgery

## Ambulatory Surgery

**It is more comfortable for patients to sleep in their own beds rather than next to a snoring roommate in a strange room , being woken up every 4 hours by a nurse to obtain vital signs !!!**

