

## Drains & documentation: Everyone's responsibility

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#### Abstract

A key aspect of enhanced recovery care in the post-operative period focuses on monitoring the output from surgical drains, however, this is a domain that is often poorly undertaken and the outcomes are multifactorial. Often, we find ourselves questioning the content and volume of the drain output, unaware if documented, and find we wait a further 24 hours to assess the drain further.

Failure to have accurate documentation of daily outputs can delay the removal of drains, which can increase the risk of infection, reduce the early mobilisation of patients and effectively increase the length of stay in hospital. This is counterintuitive for the fundamental concepts of enhanced recovery programmes.

Prospective data was collected over a two-week period, whereby it demonstrated 30% compliance with accurate drain charting. Recognition for a need to improve the documentation was discussed and key criteria

assessed to design a revised chart. Awareness of the new chart was raised, across the multidisciplinary teams, as well as implementing an additional column for the doctors to acknowledge and sign to say they have reviewed the drain. Circulation of the new chart has shown great improvement in patient care and changed the approach of responsibility on drain charting from nurse led to healthcare professional led. See it, Chart it, Sign it.