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Development and Validation of a Novel Decision Aid for WALANT Hand Surgeries: Investigating Patient Preferences

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Development and Validation of a Novel Decision Aid for WALANT Hand Surgeries: Investigating Patient Preferences
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INTRODUCTION: This study aims to develop a novel decision aid packet (DAP) for hand surgery patients deciding between Wide-Awake-Local-Anesthesia-No-Tourniquet (WALANT) and traditional anesthesia.

METHODS:

Development:
The DAP was developed following International Patient Decision Aid Standards.

Validation:

Alpha Testing
Seven hand surgeons experienced in WALANT and traditional surgeries belonging to the WALANT Research Consortium in the U.S. commented on the DAP through three rounds of editing utilizing the Delphi method. Seven patient advocates provided readability feedback.

Beta Testing
Orthopedic hand surgery patients were assigned to the control or experimental group. The experimental group was given the DAP pre-surgery. Both groups completed a validated regret scale at follow-up. A paired t-test was conducted to analyze the difference between average scores on the regret scale and pre- and post-DAP knowledge tests (p<0.05).

RESULTS: The experimental group (n=58) demonstrated a 145% increase (p<0.001) in average knowledge test scores. 74% of these patients preferred WALANT; 20.6% preferred traditional anesthesia. 81% demonstrated low decisional conflict. The experimental group scored significantly lower than the control group (n=60) on all regret scale questions (p<0.05).

DISCUSSION: Increased knowledge test scores following the DAP suggest that patients are better informed after DAP usage. Low decisional conflict scores suggest that the DAP increases patients’ confidence. Lower average regret scale scores among the experimental group indicate a relationship between DAP administration and reduced post-surgical regret. The greater patient preference for WALANT following DAP usage, alongside the lower postoperative regret, elucidates a general preference in informed patients towards the WALANT modality.