

MOST COMMON COMORBID FACTORS LEADING TO SURGICAL COMPLICATIONS



Cardiovascular

(e.g. heart problems, high blood pressure)



Advanced age

(e.g. frailty delaying recovery)



Respiratory

(e.g. asthma, pulmonary disease, smoking)



Renal

(e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney disease)



Neurological

(e.g. structural or biochemical abnormalities in the brain)

HOW YOU CAN REDUCE YOUR RISK OF SURGICAL COMPLICATIONS

Care for your health.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can result in better outcomes after surgery. Patients with cardiac conditions, respiratory problems and weight issues are more likely to experience complications during surgery.

Positive lifestyle changes can include:

- Regular visits to your doctor,
- Maintaining a healthy diet,
- Maintaining a healthy body weight,
- Exercising regularly, and
- Avoiding or stopping drinking and smoking.

YOUR RIGHT TO DECIDE

It is important that healthcare professionals consider your wishes. You have the right to choose your preferences for medical treatment.

When planning your medical treatment preferences, it is important to have:

- Clear and accurate information on the risks associated with any treatments, and
- Clear documentation of treatment you do not want to have.

It is important to plan ahead in the event that your decision-making capacity becomes impaired in the future.

An Advance Care Directive is a legal document that allows people over the age of 18 to:

- Document their wishes, preferences and instructions for future health care, end-of-life, living arrangements and personal matters, and/or
- Appoint substitute decision makers to make these decisions on their behalf if they are unable to do so.

Advance Care Directives are only effective if you are unable to and/or need support to make decisions due to ill health.

To find out more about Advance Care Planning, visit the Better Health website: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

VICTORIAN AUDIT OF SURGICAL MORTALITY

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
College of Surgeons' Gardens
250-290 Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

W: www.surgeon.org/vasm

E: vasm@surgeons.org

P: +61 3 9249 1153

F: +61 3 9249 1130



HAVING SURGERY IN VICTORIA



HAVING SURGERY IN VICTORIA

Australia has a good and safe healthcare system.

The Victorian Audit of Surgical Mortality (VASM) works to ensure that a high standard of surgical care is maintained in Victoria and that you, as a patient receive, the best care possible.

ABOUT VASM

Established in 2007, VASM is a program funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Safer Care Victoria (SCV) branch.

The VASM program independently reviews all surgically-related deaths in Victoria and identifies areas for improvement in care delivered by Victorian surgeons and health services. The findings of the audit are used to improve the quality and safety of surgery.

The VASM program collaborates with other organisations such as:

- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- The Australian Orthopaedic Association
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
- The Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons, and
- Safer Care Victoria.

The VASM not only investigates the deaths of patients who had surgery; it also investigates the deaths of patients who didn't have surgery but were admitted under the care of a surgeon.

Surgeons are asked to review the surgical deaths of patients who were under the care of their fellow surgeons. They are asked to highlight any lessons that can be learnt to improve surgical care. The findings are communicated to other surgeons, non-surgical clinicians and hospitals, as well as used in educational publications and seminars.



Patient information is private and confidential.

VICTORIAN SURGICAL STATISTICS FOR 2018



Hospital Participation

All Victorian public and private hospitals participate.

In 2018, the population of Victoria was approximately 6.4 million. There were 703,530 hospital admissions involving surgical procedures; 891 out of 1,777 cases resulted in surgical deaths (0.25%).



Victorian population: 6.4 million

Surgical procedures: 703,530

Auditable mortalities: 891

Mortality rate: 0.25%

Elective surgeries: 18%

Emergency surgeries: 82%

From the 891 auditable deaths 44% were females and 56% were males, aged 72 years and older.



Male 55% Female 45%

Mean age: 72
Median age: 77

SURGERY IS SAFE IN VICTORIA

The number of surgical deaths with identified preventable issues is continuing to decrease and the number of annual surgical deaths has halved since 2007.

Most 'surgical deaths' do not occur on the operating table. Such deaths are very rare events.

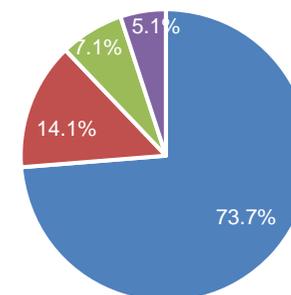
The majority of surgical deaths have happened in very elderly patients, often with underlying health problems and admitted as emergency patients, with life-threatening conditions. The actual cause of death was due to their pre-existing health issues, rather than the surgery itself.

Any surgery has its own level of risk.



As a patient, you are entitled to be aware of the risks involved with your care. The operation should be clearly explained by your surgeon. If you do not understand the risks, it is important that you ask questions. The decision to proceed with surgery is up to you or your power of attorney.

Audit outcome



From the 887 out of 891 surgical deaths audited in 2018, the following findings showed:

- **73.7%** (654/887) of cases where patients received safe and appropriate surgical care,
- **14.1%** (125/887) of cases where alternative treatment may have been an option,
- **7.1%** (63/887) of cases where improvements to care could possibly have been made,
- **5.1%** (45/887) of cases where improvements to care were required.