

[IMAGE]

Considering Elective Surgery? Weigh the Risks

If you are considering surgery, information regarding the risks involved is important for you to be able to make the right decision. Elderly people in particular need to know what risks they face going into an elective surgical procedure, because they are at a much greater risk of accidental death.

A recent study in *Effective Clinical Practice* assessed the death rates for 14 types (six cardiovascular, eight cancer-related) of elective, high-risk surgeries in 1.2 million patients 65 and older. Deaths were also examined related to the age of the patient and the procedure performed.

In older patients, the risk of operative death was “frequently” higher than 10%, which is much higher than typically reported in trial studies. Risk of death substantially increased with age in most cases; operative death for patients 80 years or older was more than double that of patients ages 65 to 69. Also, mortality differed significantly between procedures: heart valve replacement and partial lung or esophagus removal (because of cancer) were the most dangerous procedures (over 15% operative mortality rate in patients older than 80).

Age is probably the most important predictor of operative mortality. Think twice before going under the knife if you are past middle age, even if it initially appears to be your only option. Talk to your doctor of chiropractic about preventing senior health problems, or visit <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/senior.html>.

Reference: Finlayson EVA, Birkmeyer JD. Operative mortality with elective surgery in older adults. *Effective Clinical Practice*, July/August 2001;4(4), pp. 172-177.

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http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=739&no_paginate=true&no_b=true