

# Outpatient

An out**patient** (or out-patient) is a patient who is not hospitalized for 24 hours or more but who visits a hospital, clinic or associated facility for diagnosis or treatment. Treatment provided in this fashion is called ambulatory care. Sometimes surgery is performed without the need for a formal hospital admission or an overnight stay. This is called outpatient surgery.

Patient who is not hospitalized overnight but who visits a hospital, clinic, or associated facility for diagnosis or treatment.

When evaluating the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS-NSQIP) population, ACDF and lumbar discectomy procedures recorded as “outpatient” can be misleading and often did not correlate with same day discharge. These findings have significant impact on the interpretation of existing studies and define an area that needs clarification for future studies <sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Bovonratwet P, Webb ML, Ondeck NT, Gala RJ, Nelson SJ, McLynn RP, Cui JJ, Grauer JN. Discrepancies in the Definition of “Outpatient” Surgeries and Their Effect on Study Outcomes Related to ACDF and Lumbar Discectomy Procedures: A Retrospective Analysis of 45,204 Cases. Clin Spine Surg. 2018 Jan 18. doi: 10.1097/BSD.0000000000000615. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 29351096.

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