Is an escort back home always necessary?

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History

• Many changes over the years in day surgery

• 1\textsuperscript{st} paediatric day case procedure at turn of 20\textsuperscript{th} Century

• In the last 25 years day case surgery has been extended to many procedures

• Day case surgery needs to be available for as many people as possible including patients who live alone
History

• One of the newest changes in the UK in last year is the challenge on the need for a carer for the 1st 24 hours after a general anaesthetic

In the UK:

‘Following most procedures under general anaesthesia, a responsible adult should escort the patient home and provide support for the first 24 hours after surgery. A carer at home may not be essential...Transport home should be by private car or taxi; public transport is not normally appropriate’.

Ref: Guidance of the provision of anaesthetic services, RCOA, 2015
Who has a policy to let people stay at home alone?

Who has a policy to let people home without an escort?
In Europe/Scandinavia:
In a survey in Scandinavia and some European countries in 2013 only 75% of day centres demanded an escort home on their discharge criteria (variation from 36% to 100%)
Ref: Day surgery variations in routines and practices a questionnaire survey; International Journal of Surgery; March 2013; Vol 11; Stomberg et al
Escort - what are they?

- Responsible adult

- A person the patient trusts

- A person who is able to receive information about the patient and be able to explain this information to the patient later

- Looks out for the patient
Is it always necessary for an escort home?

Depends

WHY?

Has the patient had:

• a general anaesthetic?
• a local anaesthetic only?
• sedation?
Is it always necessary for an escort home after a procedure with General Anaesthesia or Sedation?

YES
WHY?

• Information recall – most important

• Journey home

• Settle in on arrival at home
Information recall

• Study in 2010 by Blandford, Stocker et al in Torbay

  – Recall of new verbal information decreased after an anaesthetic

  – Longer the time new information was given after an anaesthetic better the recall

  – Recall not as good as those people who had not had an anaesthetic

Ref: Ability of patients to retain and recall new information in the post-anaesthetic recovery period: a prospective clinical study in day surgery Anaesthesia; 66; 12 Dec 2011
Information recall

• Important information given to patients postoperatively

• Escorts can reiterate information verbally LATER
  – More likely to take the information in

• Escorts can take written information
Journey home

• Another major concern is that if patients do not have an escort then they may be tempted to drive home
  – This goes against the requirement not to drive for 24 hours post general anaesthetic or sedation

• Taxi drivers cannot be an escort as they do not fulfil the criteria of an escort
Settle in at home

• Is the patient ok?
• Does the patient have all they need?
• Do they understand the post operative instructions?
• Do they know where the written instructions are?
• Do they have phone numbers that may be needed?
Conclusion

• Many changes in day surgery over the years

• Aim is to extend day surgery to all patients including those patients who live alone

• But allowing patients home after general anaesthetic or sedation without an escort, is that a step too far?
Thank you