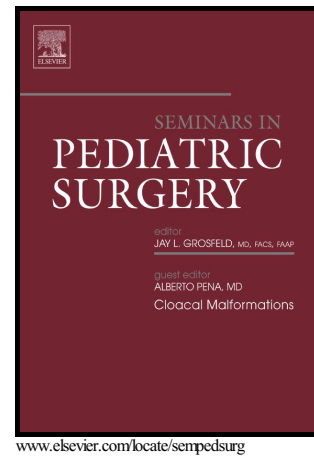


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## Operating Room Efficiency

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### Abstract

The operating room is the financial hub of any hospital, and maximizing operating room efficiency has important implications for cost savings, patient satisfaction, and medical team morale. Over the past decade, manufacturing principles and processes such as Lean and Six Sigma have been applied to various aspects of healthcare including the operating room. Although time consuming, process mapping and deep examinations of each step of the patient journey from pre-operative visit to post-operative discharge can have multiplicative benefits that extend from cost savings to maintaining the focus on improving quality and patient safety.

### Introduction

The operating room (OR) is the financial nexus of the modern hospital, accounting for up to 40% of a hospital's costs and 60-70% of revenue (1). It also represents an important interface between surgeon, patient, consultants and the community. With significant revenue at stake and operating costs conservatively estimated at \$15-\$50/minute (2, 3), we all have a strong vested interest in maximizing OR efficiency. Beyond simple financial savings, improving OR efficiency can have myriad salutatory secondary benefits including improved patient safety, increased OR throughput, and improved patient, surgeon and staff satisfaction (Figure 1). These benefits may translate into a competitive advantage in the healthcare market.

What drives OR efficiency? Or, perhaps better asked, what factors lead to OR *inefficiency*? This list is long, but includes human resource and material issues, limited availability and application of information technology, schedule variation, and impaired process flow. Variety in patient

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