

# Skills in Ambulatory Surgery: Do We All Have Them?

## Competências de um Anestesiologista em Cirurgia de Ambulatório: Todos Temos?

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### Introduction

Nowadays, we cannot discuss major outpatient surgery without considering the 'super' teams that make them up.<sup>1,2</sup> The key elements of this process involve the crucial selection of patients, which entails the integration of various factors such as surgical complexity, patient characteristics, anesthesia technique, and social factors.<sup>3</sup> The multidisciplinary of the team members, and above all, their motivation, determine the success of this project, which is, certainly, the path to follow.

Outpatient surgery has taken a prominent position, offering patients providential perioperative conditions.<sup>3</sup> Within this process, the crucial role of the Anesthesiologist can be found, whose skills are fundamental to the success of this surgical modality.<sup>1-3</sup>

In this article, I would like to share what I consider to be the core competencies of an anesthesiologist applied to ambulatory surgery, highlighting motivation, efficiency, communication, quality, and not neglecting sustainability.

### Motivation

Motivation, in my view, it is defined as the primary competency that acts as the motivating factor behind an attitude marked by the delivery of high-quality care. The commitment to provide comfort and safety to the patient plays an important role in reducing the anxiety associated with the surgical procedure. A motivated anesthesiologist is defined not only as a skilled technician but also as a good listener who understands the patient's concerns, including questions related to anesthesia, pre- and post-operative care, as well as the conditions for resuming daily activities with quality.<sup>4</sup> The persistent pursuit of professional improvement is a characteristic of a motivated Anesthesiologist who stays updated on new techniques and scientific advancements that shape today's anesthesiology.<sup>2</sup>

### Efficiency

The implementation of protocols for patient selection and comorbidity optimization improves the efficiency of outpatient units and patient safety, requiring the formation of dedicated

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multidisciplinary teams (anesthesiology, surgery, nursing). Efficiency is an obligation in Ambulatory Surgery, where time optimization is essential. In this context, the Anesthesiologist plays a noble role by safely performing anesthetic and analgesic techniques that, on the one hand, allow for rapid functional recovery of the patient and, on the other hand, provide the surgeon with optimal conditions for the procedure, thereby minimizing surgical time.<sup>3</sup> This skill in choosing the appropriate anesthetic technique for each patient, balancing short-acting anesthetics, minimizing opioid use, avoiding orotracheal intubation or muscle relaxants, and preferring conscious sedation with regional anesthesia instead of general anesthesia, as well as the use of advanced monitoring, defines an efficient anesthesiologist in carrying out their activities.<sup>3</sup> The use of block/induction rooms also play a crucial role in efficient perioperative management, contributing to a smooth workflow.<sup>5</sup>

## Communication

Communication figures the daily basis for trust and security for an anesthesiologist. It is essential for establishing a trusting relationship with the patient and the surgical team. The ability to explain, in accessible terms, the entire anesthetic process its potential risks, as well as the entire post-operative stages to obtain truly informed consent is an art. It is regarded as an essential non-technical competency that significantly contributes to improving patient satisfaction and has demonstrated efficacy in mitigating preoperative anxiety.<sup>6</sup> However, it is not only with patients and their families that the anesthesiologist plays a crucial role as a unifying and pacifying influence, but also with the rest of the colleagues. Keeping surgeons updated on the anesthetic strategy ensures improved intraoperative results, consequently increasing the overall safety of the surgical procedure.<sup>7</sup>

## Sustainability

In the current era of increased environmental consciousness, sustainability in clinical practice cannot be neglected. By optimizing the consumption of medical resources, adopting techniques that minimize waste, reducing the use of anesthetic gases or using those with lower environmental footprint, the anesthesiologist promotes an attitude that will reduce the anesthetic contribution to this widely discussed issue.<sup>8</sup>

## Quality

In an environment where efficiency and empathy are crucial, quality is manifested through a series of practices and competencies aimed at providing the patient with a safe, comfortable, and successful surgical experience. The commitment to individualized preoperative assessment, the

selection of fast-tracking anesthetic techniques, constant monitoring, effective communication, readiness to respond to medical emergencies, and excellent post-operative care define quality in outpatient surgery. A dedicated anesthesiologist is not just a technician administering their theoretical knowledge but a contributor who will play a preeminent role in the overall success of the surgical procedure.<sup>9</sup> By incorporating these practices and competencies, the anesthesiologist raises the standard of care and promotes a safe, effective, and humanized surgical experience for patients undergoing outpatient surgery.

The competencies of the Anesthesiologist are crucial for the success of ambulatory surgery. Motivation fuels the pursuit of excellence in care, efficiency optimizes patient recovery time, communication builds trust, and quality ensures safety in our clinical practice, all without compromising our responsibility for sustainability in response to the global call for environmental responsibility.

An anesthesiologist equipped with these competencies strives for delivering comprehensive, safe, and patient-centered care, thus elevating Ambulatory Surgery to a new level of medical excellence.

## And now? Do we all have these competencies?

I hope that, after reading this article, I have encouraged my colleagues to undergo training, summon their dedication and courage, and equip themselves with what makes our specialty unique. Therefore, based on my exposition, I believe that motivated anesthesiologists can all make a difference in a specialized Ambulatory Surgery team.

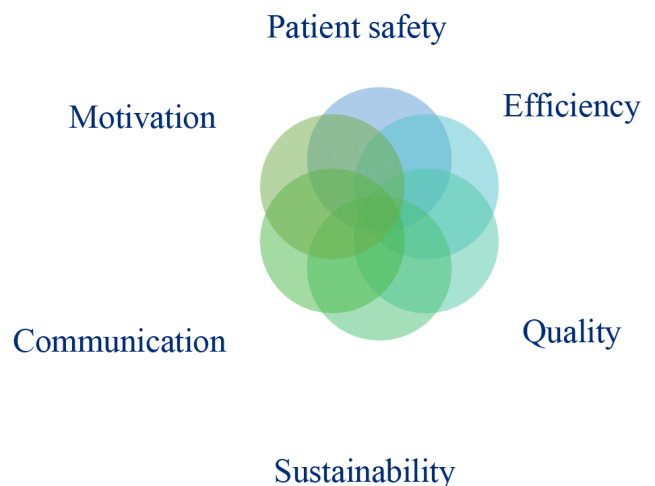


Figure 1. Fundamental Competencies in Anesthesiology

## Responsabilidades Éticas

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**JLC:** Drafting and review of article

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