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Patients awake during operations

Patients are staying awake during operations at a hospital in Lancashire which is using a pioneering technique to speed up recovery times.



The technique is used for hand, shoulder and wrist surgery

At the Royal Preston Hospital, doctors use ultrasound to find nerves which can then be treated with local anaesthetic.

Patients can go home the same day and suffer none of the after-effects of general anaesthesia.

About 300 people have been treated using the procedure, as they underwent surgery on shoulders, wrists and hands.

Staff even encourage patients to bring their own music into theatre.

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has invested about £100,000 in three ultrasound machines for the procedures.

They are used to clearly see the nerves and needle to ensure that the local anaesthetic is accurately injected.

“ It is a highly skilled procedure ”

Dr Tony Adams
Consultant anaesthetist

Dr Tony Adams, consultant anaesthetist, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Having the surgery performed under a block avoids the risks of a general anaesthetic plus patients don't experience post-operative nausea and vomiting and their faster recovery times mean that they are discharged earlier.

"It is a highly skilled procedure.

"Although patients remain awake, they are behind screens and don't see the operation being performed and they can bring in their own music or listen to an iPod while the surgeon is at work."

Consultant orthopaedic surgeon Mike Woodruff helped introduce the technique after using it in his training.

"To my knowledge no other hospital in the region has rolled out this technique but at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust we have surgeons routinely performing complex operations while the patient remains awake," he said.

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