

SPEAKER:

I think it's quite encouraging. I think that, what we've learned from this study is, is that if people do develop significant pain in their shoulder due to arthritis, associated with rheumatoid arthritis, that shoulder arthroplasty really is a predictable and reliable operation to help them improve their function as well as to gain pain relief.

When we see patients with rheumatoid arthritis or arthritis, in general, of the shoulder, our preferred way to treat these patients first is not operatively, simple, non-operative things at first. You can try medication, injection, physical therapy. Only when people have tried those things and failed, and the pain they're having is significantly interfering with the quality of their life, only then do we think about the shoulder replacement surgery.

Thankfully, the shoulder replacement surgery has really come a long way over the past 20 to 25 years. Typically now, it's a one-hour surgery, one night in a hospital, and arm just in a little, soft sling for six weeks, and all the physical therapy can be done on their own at home.

One of the other aspects we've learned is how important it is to coordinate the care of patients with rheumatoid arthritis. From the rheumatologist, who helps manage some of the medications these patients are on, from the surgical team, including the anesthesiologists and all the people in the operating room, to the post-operative period, to making sure they get the proper instruction on the physical therapy. So I think a coordinated approach taking care of these patients is critical to try to maximize their outcome.

One of the goals of the shoulder replacement surgery not only is the improvement in pain and function but really is to get people back to the lives that they enjoy, and shoulder replacement has really proven that it's a great tool to be able to help people in that regard. So many of my patients, at six weeks, are back driving. They can sleep on that side. They can go back to activities I let people go back and play golf, garden, do a wide variety of activities after this operation.