

Waking up in pain: an infographic

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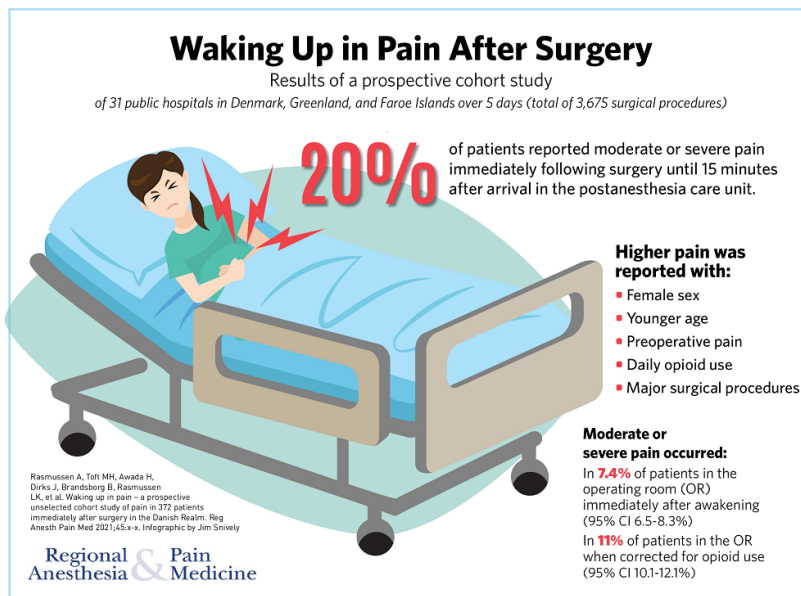
SUMMARY

In this prospective cohort study Rasmussen and colleagues¹ reported their findings of 3,702 patients who underwent a variety of surgeries and found that 20% of patients reported moderate or severe pain immediately following surgery until 15 minutes after post-anesthesia care unit arrival. The study included 31 public hospitals in Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands over a 5-day period. Risk factors for higher pain levels included female sex, younger age, preoperative pain, daily opioid use, and major surgical procedures. The authors found postoperative nausea and vomiting occurred in only 5% of cases with female sex again being identified as a risk factor, consistent with prior studies. Finally, a greater proportion of patients who were sedated in the operating room had pain in the post-anesthesia care unit versus nonsedated patients (11 versus 8%; $p=0.008$). This study illustrates that early control of postoperative pain remains a challenge.

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1 Rasmussen A, Toft MH, Awada HN, et al. Waking up in pain – a prospective unselected cohort study of pain in 3702 patients immediately after surgery in the Danish realm. *Reg Anesth Pain Med* 2021;46:948–53.