

Dr. Olivia Cheng

“Telemedicine is effective in the reduction of patient care costs for hip fracture patients”

Dr. Cheng's goal is to help deliver excellent care to the community in the most effective and efficient way. While treating patients from Orillia, Huntsville, Bracebridge, Parry Sound, etc., she realized that many of the post-surgical care appointments could be performed via telemedicine. This minimizes travel for the patient and their families. They do not have to drive hours to attend their appointments, especially when they are doing well and there are no changes in their management plan. The cost of this is multiplied if they are recovering in a rehabilitation facility or if they are living in a nursing home, and need to be transported by ambulance or third party services. This study is to retrospectively examine the costs per patient for those who sustained hip fractures from either Georgian Bay General Hospital or Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, who were transported to Collingwood General and Marine hospital for surgical care. We will be reviewing their medical chart to determine the number of those visits where the patient was progressing as expected and management plans were not altered. We will then determine the costs for them to attend these uneventful follow-up visits. These are visits that can be effectively performed over telemedicine. This cost is being covered under the sending hospital budget which is money that can be used in other needed areas for patient care. The current restrictions in the health care budget and our focus on patient-centred care led to her interest in her current research project. She hopes her research will motivate other surgeons and medical practitioners to utilize telemedicine in order to provide care for the patients closer to or even in, their home.