Constipation and defecation pattern the first 30 days after hip fracture

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Background
In the acute postoperative phase constipation is a neglected problem. Constipation increases the risk for postoperative complications, can prolong hospital stay, increase financial cost, and staff nursing care time.

Objectives
To describe the number of patients with hip fracture experiencing postoperative constipation during the acute hospital stay and first 30 days after surgery. To describe when patients normal pattern of defecation is re-established.

Method
Descriptive study. Patients consecutively admitted for hip fracture were included in the study. At admission, discharge and 30 days after surgery defecation pattern, stool form and consistency were assessed using Bristol Stool scale and a self-developed questionnaire.

Results
69.1% of patients with hip fractures reported being constipated in the first postoperative period and 62.3 % reported the same problems 30 days after surgery. Normal defecation pattern was re-established approximately 9.5 days on average after surgery though 22.7 % of the patients did not re-establish normal defecation pattern within the first 30 days after surgery.