

Operating Department Practitioners - Profession specific descriptor for registered professionals and support workers

Operating Department Practitioners are specialist Allied Health Professionals (AHP) involved in the planning and delivery of perioperative care. They are primarily employed in surgical operating departments but may also work directly within or further their training to facilitate working within a variety of acute clinical settings. These include pre-operative assessment, emergency departments, critical care units, endoscopy suites, interventional radiology, cardiac catheter suites, obstetric theatres and reproductive medicine.

Wider Determinants

Operating Department Practitioners are very aware of wider determinants of health and health inequality, they work with patients from wide range of backgrounds including significant health inequalities but treat everyone the same within the perioperative environment, there are no specific schemes for different communities or populations.

Operating Department Practitioners are often involved in developing standards and policies within Trusts for Operating Department Practitioners to comply to and which keep everyone in the operating department safe.

Health Improvement

Operating Department Practitioners in preoperative assessment clinics have conversations with patients to provide wider health advice in preparation for surgery, for example using publications developed by the [Royal College of Anaesthetists](#).

Population Healthcare

Operating Department Practitioners engage in public health initiatives, sharing information about public health work through social media and newsletters. They also run ODP awareness social media campaigns such as the #notallODPswearscrubs campaign through Twitter and Facebook.

From the moment that the patient arrives in the anaesthetic room, the Operating Department Practitioners plays an important role in putting the patient at ease and providing emotional support. Going to theatre can be a very daunting experience for patients, Operating Department Practitioners work with patients to reassure and provide comfort during a very stressful period. They can also provide this emotional support for patients during the operation if the patient is conscious during the event, for example, if they have had a spinal anaesthetic or a local block.

Health Protection

Operating Department Practitioners may work in Occupational Health departments, providing wider support and advice about working conditions and working environment to support the health of the workforce.

Operating Department Practitioners have been used as vaccinators during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operating Department Practitioners protect the health of staff and patients during surgery. They ensure that everyone avoids burns from electro surgical machines or other equipment hazards and they receive laser training to protect staff and patients from laser danger. For example, requiring staff to use eye protection sunglasses and other PPE while lasers are being used, the same with radiation safety in theatres with Xray machines.

Operating Department Practitioners are also responsible for checking anaesthetic machinery, to ensure it is functioning properly and ensuring that emergency equipment is available if needed, to make sure that patients are kept safe while they undergo surgery.

Operating Department Practitioners focus on infection prevention and control to protect health of patients undergoing surgery. The Scrub Practitioners during surgery are responsible for maintaining the sterile field during surgery and are responsible for any instruments or consumables that are needed for the surgery and making sure that they are sterile for the surgery. This is crucial to avoid contamination and risk of infection to the patient.

Operating Department Practitioners protect staff health, for example, associated with the risks of heavy lifting or prolonged standing periods, or other risk of back injury. All Operating Department Practitioners are given manual handling training at university level and are re-educated at a Trust level every year.

Operating Department Practitioner – Wider Reading and Case Study Examples

<p>Health Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal College of Anaesthetists – COVID-19 	<p>Wider Determinants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inequalities in Health Alliance
<p>Population Healthcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention and Perioperative care 	<p>Health Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perioperative Optimisation Case Studies