

How can we reduce delays in when surgical cases start?

The key step in applying science to reducing delays is not to just estimate case durations using the average value. Instead, incorporate into the decision-making the estimated uncertainties in the estimates. Just as one surgeon in an OR cannot start until another has finished, painters cannot start until the plumbing is completed. Good project management considers the uncertainty in the decisions. For more details, [download this article](#). In addition, [download](#) this more recent paper with application to displays.

These principles can be applied by modestly revising scheduled case start times once the schedule has otherwise been finalized. Such changes have no influence on whether a case is performed in a specific OR on a specific day, just the start time. For a lecture on the topic, [click here](#). For the corresponding articles, [click here \[PDF\]](#) and [click here \[PDF\]](#). See also the “Earliness” page of the [example report](#) used in my [full course](#) and some of the [briefer versions](#).

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