



## Wei ghing the costs and benefits of surgery

If you knew that your recovery from surgery would last months or even years, would that change your mind about having it?

Hamilton Health Sciences researchers at the [Population Health Research Institute](#) (PHRI) are looking to shed some light on that question and hopefully make the decision making-process easier for patients.

At the root of this work is functional ability, which includes basic actions like bathing and eating, and how these everyday tasks relate to quality of life. Studies have shown that many adult patients requiring health care would rather live a fulfilling life than a longer one.

According to Dr. Jessica Spence, a medical resident and PhD

candidate whose thesis is investigating this topic, there's a

the Hamilton area by supervising a team of occupational therapy students from McMaster University who visit and observe patients who have also recently undergone heart surgery. Using the same 30 day and one-year timeframe, the goal is to determine if the SAGE scale can produce the same results as in-person assessments. Results of this study should be available within a year.

I want to empower patients to make informed decisions about their health and their health care, Dr. Spence says. Surgery is significant and recovery can be difficult. Patients need to know that they may not be able to return to work or play with their grandkids for a long time. The only way we can do that is find a way to tell them what they can expect if they choose to have surgery.