

Anesthesiologist Proposes Use of Metric Time

HOUSTON, TX - Dr. Alan Payne, an anesthesiologist and physicist, proposes the use of metric time for determining surgical time duration.



“How many times at your facility have you ask your surgeon for a time estimate and the surgeon tells you, ‘10 minutes till we’re done.’ But 20 or even 30 minutes later, they’re still not closing skin!” explains Dr. Payne. “This simple question can often offend the surgeon. We are asking the question not to suggest that that surgeon is operating slowly, but to determine the amount of anesthesia medications we still need to administer to the patient.”

This is why Payne has implemented “metric time” in their [operating rooms](#). “One metric minute is equivalent to 2.8 standard minutes. Once we enter the operating room, we initiate metric time. The results have been remarkable at our institution. We have been able to stay on schedule and give staff and family member realistic time estimates for surgeries and procedures.”

Dr. Payne further explains. “This only makes sense. We use kilograms, not pounds. We use liters and not pints anymore in medicine. Time is the only non-metric unit left to standardize! The use of metric time can also extend to [football](#) games and even at home. When I tell my wife I’ll be home in 20 minutes, she knows that is about 40 standard minutes. This has really reduced disappointment and realigned our expectations!”