Immediate Release
Case Study Included

FIT(BIT) AS A FIDDLE
Wearables Can Predict Recovery Following Surgery

London - February, 2024 - A recent study has revealed that giving patients Fitbit-type wearables post-surgery can help plastic surgeons predict the likelihood of full recovery after breast reconstructions and offer bespoke treatment plans if recovery is not straightforward.

The study, entitled Recovery after breast surgery predicts long term functional outcomes was unveiled at the recent Annual Meeting of the British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (BAPRAS – www.bapras.org.uk) revealed significant insights into the short-term and long-term recovery trends following breast and axillary (armpit) surgeries. Data collected during the study showed that although physical activity was understandably somewhat reduced in all patients straight after the operation, if activity increased by the two week mark, the patient was more likely to have a good outcome long-term. Having remote access to this data gives medical professionals what they need to offer additional support to patients who are not hitting this recovery trajectory, such as extra physiotherapy, and encouragement to walk more.

The study, conducted by plastic surgery registrar Richard Kwasnicki and the research team at Imperial College London, underscores the need to introduce wearable technology into post-surgery (Enhanced Recovery After Surgery - ERAS) protocols. WAMs are currently commonly used in cardio-thoracic and vascular procedures, but this study makes it clear that they can be of huge benefit in plastic surgery patients, making for quicker recovery, as well as enabling healthcare workers to personalise rehabilitation, and identifying people who may face complications.

Author Richard Kwasnicki; also a post-doctoral clinical Fellow; says:
"This study has provided us with exciting insights into the advantages of incorporating Wearable

Activity Monitors in post-surgery recovery, as well as unveiling the broader potential of artificial intelligence in comprehensive patient recovery. Previous research has demonstrated the invaluable role of WAMs in patients with vascular problems in their legs, showcasing superior outcomes compared to those in supervised exercise classes.
"Looking ahead, our aim is to seamlessly integrate this technology without burdening patients with an extra device. We envision utilising their existing devices by installing an app, for which they grant permission, allowing remote access. The expansive potential for furthering this study is significant. This technology complements traditional patient care, acting as an additional feature that brings healthcare professionals closer to their patients. It facilitates more detailed analyses of recovery progress, shedding light on potential issues and stumbling blocks."

By leveraging technology, patients could access a suite of information and support through user friendly apps. This includes scar care tips, exercise prompts, and connections with healthcare professionals, enhancing the overall recovery experience.
Richard continues:
"The focus is on empowering patients, optimising recovery through a tech-led, patient-empowered approach that not only enhances outcomes but also proves more cost-effective for healthcare units. The ground-breaking revelation that early recovery trends significantly impact long-term results presents an opportunity to proactively plan and support patients, even without direct intervention, by leveraging technology to boost their recovery progress."

Consultant plastic surgeon and BAPRAS President, Mani Ragbir, says:
"I am excited to witness the transformative potential of incorporating fitness monitors in post-surgery recovery, as highlighted by the recent study presented to the surgical community at our Annual conference. The prospect of predicting recovery outcomes and leveraging technology

seamlessly into patient care represents a significant step forward. This innovative approach aligns with our commitment to advancing contemporary practice and providing optimal care for our patients."

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Notes to Editors:
About the British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (BAPRAS)
The British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons is the voice of plastic surgery in the UK, advancing education in all aspects of the specialty and promoting understanding of contemporary practice. BAPRAS speaks for the majority of reconstructive and aesthetic plastic surgeons providing services to patients in the UK today.

For more information visit www.bapras.org.uk or @BAPRASvoice on Twitter and Instagram.

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