

**Supplementary Table 5. Patient codes and quotes**

Themes	Patient codes	Patient quotes	
		Barrier to participation	Facilitator to participation
Understanding and attitudes towards placebo	Mind over matter; real versus fake pain; emotional response to concept of surgical placebo	<p>PQ2: <i>"What, are you trying to go, "Well, these people are all crazy and they don't really have a sore leg?" (Patient 13)</i></p> <p>PQ3: <i>"But for me to go through the placebo, I will know, I can tell, because I am attached to my body. I know if it's done or not." (Patient 17)</i></p>	<p>PQ1: <i>"I think if it works it'd be pretty cool because I'd put that down to the power of the brain healing itself or the body healing itself because it thinks it might have been healed." (Patient 12)</i></p>
Attitudes towards randomisation and perception of equipoise	Randomisation eliminates bias; informed consent; preference for treatment arm;	<p>PQ5: <i>"No, it's like jiggling, like playing around, it's like you're a guineapig... I don't want to be a pin cushion. I've tried so many ways, cortisone by an injection, cortisone in tablets, through the ultrasound, I've done all of them. That's why, that's why I'm more how can I say? I'm 100 per cent more wanting the operation now, because yeah. I've tried everything, it's not as if I haven't tried" (Patient 18)</i></p> <p>PQ6: <i>"It is obvious to me which approach I need because of the experiences my family members have had with the same surgery" (Patient 12)</i></p> <p>PQ7: <i>"My doctor told me I have no choice but to have surgery" (Patient 10)</i></p>	<p>PQ4: <i>"I think if the trial was explained fully to you and you're aware of what they were trying to – the outcome. Yeah, I don't think I'd have any hesitation." (Patient 02).</i></p>
Perception of risk	Too much risk; Anaesthetic danger; Altruism	<p>PQ8: <i>"What you're doing in this case is that you're actually interfering with</i></p>	<p>PQ10: <i>"If you don't have the research, how are they going to learn ... You've got</i></p>

		<p><i>somebody's physiological anatomy, whatever the heck - your body, let's say, and putting it under stress, medical stress to either a greater or lesser degree."</i> (Patient 21)</p> <p>PQ9: <i>"If you were going to put someone under anaesthetic, which is a dangerous procedure anyway, I think that you would need to say to yourself well this operation needs to be done."</i> (Patient 04).</p>	<p><i>to have people like the researchers to help make these things right. If I can help some poor bugger that needs it, that would give me a really nice self-satisfaction feeling that I've helped somebody."</i> (Patient 14).</p>
Ethical concerns	Surgeons duty of care; Compromised trust; Ethics of unproven treatments	<p>PQ11: <i>"Whether that in fact is ethical is a very very dicey thing to do. I mean, I sort of - this is the sort of thing that Mengele did in Auschwitz"</i> (Patient 21)</p> <p>PQ12: <i>"I think it would definitely cloud your judgement in - maybe your confidence in the medical staff might [be lost]. I wouldn't like it I don't think."</i> (Patient 04)</p>	<p>PQ13: <i>"I think the perception is: 'Oh, if doctor's have been doing it for so long, then it must work.' And I say, 'Well no, you have a profound misunderstanding of the healthcare system. They're winging it'. And that's just the accepted thing to do. It's not the proven thing to do... But we're still doing them because we don't have anything else in their place."</i> (Patient 19)</p>