
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
MEDIA RELEASE



Western Australian Audit of Surgical Mortality releases 2012 Annual Report

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The 2012 report of the Western Australian Audit of Surgical Mortality (WAASM), a quality assurance programme aimed at the ongoing improvement of surgical care, was released today.

Funded by the Western Australian Department of Health and managed by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, WAASM involves the clinical review of all cases where patients have died in hospital while under the care of a surgeon.

The number of Western Australian surgeons actively participating in the Audit has steadily increased since its inception in 2001 and currently 100% of WA surgeons are participating in the Audit. Surgeon participation has increased 13% since the last annual report release. In 2010 the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons made participation in audits of surgical mortality a requirement of recertification in its Continuing Professional Development Program (CPD).

The principal observations in this year's annual report are:

- A steady decrease in the number of deaths reported to WAASM has been observed. Since 2004, the number of surgically-related deaths has decreased from 35 per 100,000 population to 26 per 100,000 population in 2011. This is a decrease of 26%.
- WAASM's initiatives since its inception in 2001 have identified and promoted a wide range of activities which may have contributed to decreasing surgical mortality rates. These initiatives include disseminating booklets of de-identified cases from the audit to all surgeons to facilitate educational audit feedback, and symposia on deep vein thrombosis prophylaxis, anticoagulation in the perioperative patient, perioperative fluid management and recognising deteriorating patients. Additionally, numerous recommendations have been made based on data collected through the Audit: WAASM has advocated for the separation of emergency and elective general surgery in Perth teaching hospitals and has disseminated information on futile surgery and delays leading to patient death.

WAASM, like all audits of surgical mortality conducted by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, demonstrates an ongoing commitment to excellence on the part of its Fellows.

The WAASM Annual Report is available on the College's website: www.surgeons.org.

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