

---

# ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

# MEDIA RELEASE

---



## Australian and New Zealand Audit of Surgical Mortality releases annual report

**Tuesday 29 January, 2013**

The third annual report of the Australian and New Zealand Audit of Surgical Mortality (ANZASM), a national quality assurance programme aimed at the ongoing improvement of surgical care, was released today.

Managed by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, ANZASM involves the collation and clinical review of data relating to cases where patients have died in hospital while under the care of a surgeon.

The principal aims of the audit are to inform, educate, facilitate change and improve the quality of practice within surgery. The peer review process is designed to highlight system and process errors and to identify trends in surgical mortality. 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.

The Chair of ANZASM, Professor Guy Maddern, said he was pleased to note that the proportion of surgeons actively participating in the audit had significantly increased, from 60% in 2009 to 90% in 2011. He said non-participating surgeons seemed to be predominantly those working in private hospitals, particularly in Queensland and New South Wales, who do not have access to the audit, and surgeons who have retired or gone overseas temporarily to study or work.

“This rising participation rate can only enhance the data collection process,” Professor Maddern said. “To have standardised data being collected across Australia represents an enormous achievement for the audit, which started out as a state-based audit in Western Australia. The considerable financial commitment made to the audit by all states and territories is a great vote of confidence in the value of such an enterprise. ANZASM also welcomes the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) who agreed to participate in the audit process from 2012. Their data will be reflected in the next national report.

“The audits are essentially an educational exercise, enabling the surgical community to promote safer health care practices. For example, the regional audits, in collaboration with their respective health departments, have been holding very successful symposia on ‘Delays in Transfers’ and ‘Communication in Handover’— topics that have been identified as important by the audits. It is also pleasing to note that the incidence of adverse events remains low, at 5% of the 10,044 completed cases.”

Professor Maddern also welcomed the increased usage of the ‘Fellows Interface’, an online web-based system for the inputting of surgical case and first-line assessment forms.

“ANZASM, 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,” Professor Maddern said.

The ANZASM Annual Report is available on the College’s website: <http://www.surgeons.org/for-health-professionals/audits-and-surgical-research/anzasm.aspx>

**Media inquiries: Michael Barrett, Manager Media & Public Relations  
0429 028 933 or (03) 9249 1263**