



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE

Removing the gallbladder of patients over eighty: predictors of morbidity and mortality

Wednesday 4 May, 2011

Delegates to the 80th Annual Scientific Congress (ASC) of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons have been told that the laparoscopic removal of the gallbladder can be performed with acceptable risk in appropriately selected patients over the age of 80.

Under the guidance of Dr Stephen Allison, a Brisbane based general surgeon, Dr Andrae Holley, a surgical registrar, conducted a retrospective analysis of 198 consecutive patients aged 80 and over who underwent laparoscopic cholecystectomy between September 2004 and November 2009. The aim of the study was to evaluate the outcomes of the procedure in both an acute and elective setting.

The review compared age groups (80-84 vs 85-89 vs <90), gender, acute vs elective, the American Society of Anaesthesiologists (ASA) score, comorbid conditions, and their relative contribution to peri-operative complications and length of hospital stay.

Dr Holley reported that of the 198 patients, 93 were female and 105 male. There was a mean age of 83.9 years, in a range of 80 to 95 years. All procedures were completed laparoscopically, with 101 patients undergoing elective procedures and the remaining 97 admitted acutely. The overall complication rate was 26.8 per cent, including six deaths (30 day mortality) or 3.0 per cent. Complications were graded 1-4 as per Royal Australasian College of Surgeons guidelines.

“There was a higher incidence of complications in patients undergoing surgery in an acute admission as well as those with an ASA score greater than 3,” Dr Holley said. “Patients over the age of 90 did not have a significantly higher complication rate when compared with their younger counterparts.”

“Laparoscopic cholecystectomy can be performed with acceptable risk in appropriately selected patients over the age of 80. This study indicates that surgeons can consider factors other than age in obtaining informed consent in this patient group,” Dr Holley concluded.

Dr Holley’s presentation is one of hundreds at this year’s ASC, covering all surgical specialties and aspects of surgical history and education. Nearly 2,000 delegates are expected to attend the ASC, which runs from 2 to 6 May and is being held at the Adelaide Convention Centre. The ASC program is available online at www.surgeons.org

**Media inquiries: Michael Barrett, Media & PR Manager - 0429 028 933
Bridget Hooper, Media & PR Officer – 0437 008 891**