



Australian and New Zealand Audit of Surgical Mortality releases annual report

Monday 16 April, 2012

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

Managed by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, ANZASM involves the clinical review and collation of data of all 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 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 81% in 2010. 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 from all the states and territories is a great vote of confidence in the value of such an enterprise. It is now our responsibility to deliver on its promise.

“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 Departments of Health, have been holding very successful symposia on ‘Recognising the Deteriorating Patient’ and ‘Delays in Transfers’ – topics that have been identified as important by the audits.

“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>

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