

# Research and Audit Federation of Trainees (RAFT): uniting trainees to undertake national projects

Written on behalf of the RAFT committee

Anaesthetic trainees are at the cutting edge of collaborative work within our specialty and are making remarkable progress in developing networks across the UK. Over the last 24 months, 11 regional trainee groups have formed following the success of the South West Anaesthesia Matrix (SWARM).

The National Institute of Academic Anaesthesia (NIAA) and Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCOA) have recently endorsed a new, trainee-led, national umbrella group known as the Research and Audit Federation of Trainees (RAFT) to link these regional groups into a national collaboration. This article aims to advertise the benefits of a collaborative model, enthuse like-minded trainees to start new research groups in their own deaneries and update trainees on the progress made by RAFT.

Anaesthesia is a leader in collaborative audit and research within the UK. The National Audit Projects (NAPs) have given us international recognition as a specialty that works together to collect high-quality data to answer important questions and improve patient care.<sup>1</sup> Current initiatives such as the Anaesthesia Sprint Audit Project (ASAP),<sup>2</sup> the National Emergency Laparotomy Audit (NELA)<sup>3</sup> and the first Health Services Research Centre (HSRC) Sprint National Anaesthesia Project (SNAP)<sup>4</sup> are examples of projects that aim to improve patient quality of care through collaboration.

## But what of the benefits?

A true collaborative model will recognise the contribution made by every individual in project design, implementation, patient recruitment, data collection and data dissemination. There are a number of innovative ways of doing this:

- 1 By publishing the name of every individual involved in the study (e.g. EuSOS,<sup>5</sup> the UK was the largest recruiter for this international prospective observational study, all trust registered individuals are now citable on Pubmed, SNAP-1 may follow this model).
- 2 By publishing under the authorship name of the group whilst listing individual group members on the group or project website (e.g. [www.ukswarm.com](http://www.ukswarm.com), there are a variety of 'contribution levels' used to distinguish between a range in individual involvement, may also use a 'film credits' approach where trainees are named for their specific roles in the project e.g. Ethics submission).
- 3 A combination of the two.

Collaboration brings specific benefits to a study; these include the widespread recruitment of high numbers of patients over a large number of sites at a high rate. This means that studies recruit rapidly and produce data that is highly relevant, applicable and that can change practice. Benefits to the trainee include the opportunity to be involved in work that impacts on patient care, opportunities to learn about the processes involved in local research and development application processes, opportunities to gain experience in patient recruitment, data collection and data upload and, finally, opportunities in managing data collection teams.

## Regional trainee research collaboratives

There are now 11 regional trainee collaboratives in the UK, varying in stages of maturity. These include:

- Anaesthetic Audit & Research Matrix of Yorkshire (AARMY).
- Intensive Care & Anaesthesia Research Network North East Trainees (INCARNNET).
- Mersey Anaesthesia Research and Quality Improvement Collaborative (MARQ).
- North West Research & Audit Group (NWRAG).
- Pan-London Perioperative Audit and Research Network (PLAN).
- Severn Trainees Anaesthetic Research group (STAR).
- South Yorkshire Hospitals Audit & Research Collaboration (SHARC).
- South Coast Perioperative Audit & Research Collaboration (SPARC).
- South West Anaesthesia Research Matrix (SWARM).
- West Midlands Trainee Research in Anaesthesia and Intensive care Network (WM TRAIN).
- Welsh Anaesthetic Audit Research and Engagement Network (WAAREN).

For further details please see the trainee pages of the NIAA website at [www.niaa.org.uk/article.php?newsid=925](http://www.niaa.org.uk/article.php?newsid=925). New groups are

also developing in Northern Ireland, the East of England deanery and the Oxford deanery. Each group will face its own challenges and has its own ambitions, but collaboration is a key ethos behind them all, as is recognition of the work contributed by all involved.

Trainee collaborative groups are not a new concept. Previous groups within anaesthesia include the RTIC Severn group (<http://saferintubation.com>), that undertook work improving quality of out-of-theatre intubation.<sup>6</sup> Outside of anaesthesia the West Midlands Research Collaborative has led the way with the recent publication of their randomised control trial, ROSSINI.<sup>7</sup> The National Surgical Research Collaborative ([www.nationalresearch.org.uk](http://www.nationalresearch.org.uk)) unites the 16 regional general surgical groups and the ten surgical specialty groups from across the UK. They recently published the results of their national appendectomy audit.<sup>8</sup> We will endeavour to match their progress.

## Research and Audit Federation of Trainees

RAFT was founded at a meeting hosted by the RCoA on 2 December 2013, where trainee representatives from the majority of the regional groups met and discussed terms of engagement. Since this date and the formation of the RAFT committee, members have met for a second time, again hosted by the RCoA, where they agreed upon the RAFT governance document and outlined the strategy for 2014.

RAFT is an umbrella organisation that aims to network the growing number of regional groups and facilitate national anaesthetic, trainee-led projects. It is a committee comprised of two representative members of each regional group, managed by an elected Chair, two Vice-Chairs and a Communications lead. As new regional collaborative groups are formed, representatives will be invited to join the committee and represent their group on a national level.

**Table 1 Organisational aims of RAFT**

ORGANISATIONAL AIMS of RAFT	
1	To harness the enthusiasm, manpower and energy of individual trainee groups for national audit and research projects whilst encouraging local and regional activity.
2	To provide a formal framework for communication and cooperation between existing regional networks.
3	To provide help and support for fledgling regional groups.
SECONDARY AIMS	
1	To work alongside the HSRC Quality, Audit and Research Co-ordinator (QuARC) network in delivering multi-centre research and audit studies with potential to make an impact.
2	To promote and support the development of trainee-led deanery research groups across all specialties.
3	To work with trainee collaborative networks from other specialties.

It is envisaged that projects will be adopted by RAFT via a number of mechanisms (this list is not exhaustive):

- 1 As an escalation of a regional 'grass-roots' project that has been successful at a deanery level. This mechanism will provide an avenue for all trainees to develop their research idea into a national project.
- 2 As a collaboration with one of our supporting organisations e.g. NIAA/RCoA/GAT (Group of Anaesthetists in Training)/ICS (Intensive Care Society) and the NIHR (National Institute of Health Research). An example is the Sprint National Anaesthesia Project initiative. In this instance the RAFT committee will highlight a national project that is of benefit to patients and trainees alike, and recommended in a 'top-down' approach.
- 3 In collaboration with a group from another specialty. Potential examples include the Pan specialty Audit and Research Collaborative (PARC) and the National Surgical Research Collaborative.

For 2014 we hope to identify a home-grown, 'quick win' project that will be

championed by all 11 of the regional groups. This project will primarily act as a 'proof of concept', will help solidify our working relationship, and will develop mechanisms of communication, data collection and data centralisation.

In the short-term, we are proud to support the first Sprint National Anaesthesia Project, investigating the patient-reported outcomes of patient satisfaction after general anaesthesia and patient-reported awareness. We aim to facilitate patient recruitment by ensuring that each hospital within our deaneries has a Local Lead Investigator and team of Local Investigators, as well as organising and managing trainee participation.

Please see the SNAP-1 website for more information at: [www.niaa-hsrc.org.uk/SNAPs](http://www.niaa-hsrc.org.uk/SNAPs).

## The future is exciting

With the continued support of the NIAA, RCoA, GAT and ICS trainee committee as well as key consultant mentors (Professor Martin Leuwer, Drs Gary Minto, Ramani Moonesinghe and Joyce Yeung), we hope to continue championing trainee-led collaborative projects across the UK, as well as support new, fledgling groups as they

grow and ensure the continued success of our founding members.

For more information please contact any of the regional groups, email [swarm@nhs.net](mailto:swarm@nhs.net) or visit [www.niaa.org.uk/article.php?newsid=925](http://www.niaa.org.uk/article.php?newsid=925).

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/RAFTrainees](http://www.facebook.com/RAFTrainees)

Twitter: [@RAFTrainees](https://twitter.com/RAFTrainees)

**Committee**

- Chair: Thomas Clark (SWARM)
- Vice-Chairs: Charlotte Small (WMTRAIN) and Ben Harris (SPARC)
- Communication Lead: Jason Lie (NWRAG)

**References**

- 1 National Audit Projects. NIAA ([www.nationalauditprojects.org.uk](http://www.nationalauditprojects.org.uk)).
- 2 Hip Fracture Perioperative Network (HipPeN). NHS Networks. ([www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/hip-fracture-anaesthesia](http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/hip-fracture-anaesthesia)).
- 3 National Emergency Laparotomy Audit ([www.nela.org.uk](http://www.nela.org.uk)).
- 4 Sprint National Anaesthesia Projects. HSRC ([www.niaa-hsrc.org.uk/SNAPs](http://www.niaa-hsrc.org.uk/SNAPs)).
- 5 European Surgical Outcomes Study. (<http://eusos.esicm.org/eusos-update>).
- 6 T. M. Bowles et al. Out-of-theatre tracheal intubation: prospective multicentre study of clinical practice and adverse events. *Br Journ Anaesth* 2011;107(5):687–92.
- 7 T D Pinkney. Impact of wound edge protection devices on surgical site infection after laparotomy: multicentre randomised controlled trial (ROSSINI Trial). *BMJ* 2013;347:f4305.
- 8 National Surgical Research Collaborative. Multicentre observational study of performance variation in provision and outcome of emergency appendicectomy. *Br J Surg*. 2013;100(9):1240–52.

# Consultations

Please see below consultations that the Royal College of Anaesthetists has responded to in the last two months.

Originator	Consultation
AOMRC - UK Donation Ethics Committee (UKDEC)	Consultation on consent to donation from children
Royal College of Physicians	National Ambulance Clinical Record Standard project
NHS England (Paediatric Medicine CRG)	Proposed Transition specification insert for children and young people transitioning to adult services
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence	Safe Staffing Guidelines - Safe Midwifery Staffing for Maternity Settings: consultation on draft scope
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence	NICE's vision for an enhanced British National Formulary (BNF)
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence	Preoperative tests draft scope consultation
Department of Health	Ill-treatment or wilful neglect in health and social care
Department of Health	Fundamental standards for health and social care providers
Liberal Democrats	Paul Burstow MP's consultation on the ageing society
AOMRC - UK Donation Ethics Committee (UKDEC)	Donation after brain stem death