

## National Emergency Laparotomy Audit contract awarded



**Professor M Grocott**

Director

Following the 2011 call for proposals for new audits from the Health Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP), the contract for the National Emergency Laparotomy Audit (NELA) has been awarded to the Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA). NELA is the first anaesthesia led national audit and the first to focus specifically on perioperative care. NELA builds on the excellent foundations established by the Emergency Laparotomy Network (ELN) in describing and highlighting the striking variation in processes and outcomes following emergency laparotomy.

NELA is a partnership between the National Institute of Academic Anaesthesia (NIAA) Health Services Research Centre (HSRC) and the Royal College of Surgeons' Clinical Effectiveness Unit, with consultancy and data linkage provided by the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre. All anaesthetists are stakeholders in NELA through the NIAA, whose funding partners are the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland, the Royal College of Anaesthetists, the

journals *Anaesthesia* and the *British Journal of Anaesthesia*, and the specialist societies.

The aims of NELA are to measure and improve the quality of care of adult patients undergoing emergency laparotomy (EL) for gastrointestinal conditions in England and Wales. The ambition is to facilitate the development of effective quality improvement initiatives through analysis and publication of comparative data on the organisation (structure and processes) and outcomes of care delivered by providers of EL: in other words, we hope to identify and spread examples of best practice and optimal infrastructure to enable secondary care providers to improve the quality of their care for patients undergoing EL.

The first year of NELA will comprise a recruitment of sites and 'organisational audit'. The organisational audit will focus on describing the infrastructure available to deliver care for EL, such as appropriate facilities and staffing. Individual patient data collection will begin in the first quarter of 2014. NELA will adjust for case-mix in the analysis of data and will be able to report both short- and longer-term mortality. In time, we also hope to explore the potential for Patient Reported Outcome Measures following EL, if and when appropriate measures become available.

Dr Dave Murray (ELN) will be the NELA clinical lead. The surgical advisor will be Mr Iain Anderson (national clinical lead for emergency surgery, Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland), and Dr Carol Peden (Health Foundation/

Institute for Healthcare Improvement Quality Improvement Fellow) will advise on quality improvement.

The NIAA Health Services Research Centre will deliver the project for the RCoA and will work closely with the Emergency Laparotomy Network to deliver the audit within hospitals. In the coming months we will be recruiting NELA staff, including a project manager and administration team, and the audit will commence in the spring of 2013.

This is an exciting time. We have an opportunity, through an anaesthesia led initiative, to improve the care of a group of patients we know to have a high burden of serious complications and death. Please help us to succeed.

Updates on the NELA are currently available on the HSRC website, pending development of a dedicated NELA website. NELA site recruitment will commence in early 2013.

### CHANGE OF DATE

#### FIRST UK PAIN CLINICAL RESEARCH FORUM Thursday, 1 November 2012

The first UK Pain Clinical Research Forum will be held at the Royal College of Anaesthetists on Thursday, 1 November 2012 and chaired by Professor David Rowbotham.

For more info, please go to:  
[www.niaa-hsrc.org.uk](http://www.niaa-hsrc.org.uk)