

A newsletter for anaesthetists in Northern Ireland

February 2019



Dr Darrell Lowry

Welcome to the winter newsletter of the RCoA Northern Irish Board. I hope that you all managed to enjoy some time off over the festive period and are now well settled into 2019.

As I write, Brexit is still unresolved and it will be interesting to see how it may affect the NHS going forwards. The usual winter pressures are causing bed shortages and cancellations of operating lists, and of course we still have no local Assembly or Health Minister in post.

The RCoA Northern Irish Board last met in Belfast in October, and we discussed many of the issues mentioned above. We were delighted to welcome the new President of the College, [Professor Ravi Mahajan](#), to our meeting. In addition, our guest speaker, Dr Niall Herity gave an update on the new elective care reforms that are being introduced locally.

In this edition of the newsletter, we are highlighting some of the local anaesthetic societies that have organised high quality conferences, all taking place this year in Northern Ireland. These events provide a great opportunity to hear national and international speakers without the expense of travelling out of the region. They also allow networking opportunities and a chance to meet with colleagues, both old and new. I would encourage you to support these meetings if you can.

Our trainee representative, Dr Niamh Sweeney, has penned a very pertinent and topical article on the issues currently affecting trainees. Today's trainees are tomorrow's consultants, so please value and support them. Anaesthesia still remains a very popular specialty, and one of the reasons for this is the supervision and support that our trainees receive.

The School of Anaesthesia in the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) has seen some changes recently, and I am delighted to report that Dr Mary Molloy (Belfast Trust) has been appointed to the role of Deputy Head of School. Mary is also the new College Deputy Regional Advisor for the region, whilst Dr Tim Bennett has taken over as College Tutor in Craigavon Area Hospital – we wish both of them well in their new roles.

The College is also seeking a new Lay Committee representative for Northern Ireland, so if you know anyone who would be interested in this role please encourage them to get in touch ([see advert on next page](#)).

Finally, if anyone would like to contribute to future editions of the newsletter please get in touch with me at Darrell.Lowry@southerntrust.hscni.net

I hope that you enjoy the newsletter and find it interesting and informative.

Dr Darrell Lowry, Chair RCoA Northern Irish Board



Lay Committee recruitment for Northern Ireland

Call for lay volunteers to join the Northern Ireland Advisory Board of the Royal College of Anaesthetists

The College Lay Committee was established in 1998 with the purpose of providing a non-clinical view on the College's activities to improve patient care and experience.

The Advisory Boards for the devolved countries of Scotland and Wales each have a lay member drawn from the College Lay Committee, and applications are now invited for members of the public to provide lay representation on the Northern Ireland Advisory Board.

The successful candidate will be a full member of the College Lay Committee, but with specific responsibility for representing the Lay Committee on the Northern Ireland Advisory Board.

More information and an application pack [can be found here](#).

Please forward this vacancy to anyone who might be interested in this role.

The deadline for applications is 28 February 2019.

The Northern Ireland Regional Anaesthesia Society

Regional anaesthesia (RA) has gained popularity in recent years, especially ultrasound guided peripheral nerve blocks. They offer superior pain relief for a variety of surgical procedures. RA can also contribute to a reduction in chronic postoperative pain, postoperative nausea, vomiting and pulmonary complications. RA can enhance patient satisfaction and reduce the length of stay in hospital.

[The Northern Ireland Regional Anaesthesia Society](#) (NIRAS) was founded in recent years by a group of experienced regional anaesthesia enthusiasts, passionate about improving education, training and recognition of regional anaesthesia across Northern Ireland and beyond. Every year we organise one Basic RA Course for novices in regional anaesthesia and one Advanced Cadaveric RA Course in cooperation with Queens University Belfast. This allows participants to practice a variety of peripheral blocks on fresh frozen cadavers using ultrasound under the direct supervision of highly skilled RA experts. We are proud that our Belfast Cadaveric Course (BCC) is one of the official RA-UK Cadaveric Courses. Support and cooperation with RA-UK has been vital in the development of the course. We also enjoy close cooperation with the [Irish Society of RA](#) (ISRA) in a variety of our projects. The next BCC is scheduled for 21–22 June 2019.

It is my great pleasure to announce that Belfast will host this year's RA-UK Annual Scientific Meeting in the Waterfront Hall on 16-17 May 2019. This year promises a new and ambitious format containing two days of lectures, interactive sessions, discussions with experts 'how I do it', Pro-Con debates, workshops and much more.

Along with the recipient of this year's Bruce Scott award – Professor Ki Jinn Chin from Toronto, Canada, participants will have a great opportunity to meet world leaders of Point of Care Ultrasound (POCUS) – Dr Haskins and Dr Boublik from United States as well as Dr Kopp from Mayo Clinic, USA and Dr Jaeger from Denmark. The conference is a joint project between RA-UK (represented by President Dr Amit Pawa) and ISRA (represented by President Dr Karthik Srinivasan).

We are looking forward to meeting you in Belfast on 16–17 May. For more information visit www.ra-uk.org and www.niras.org.uk or follow us on twitter ([@NIRASociety](https://twitter.com/NIRASociety)).

Dr Peter Merjavy, Consultant Anaesthetist, Craigavon Area Hospital and NIRAS President



EARLY BIRD
REGISTRATION ENDS
31ST JANUARY

RA-UK
Regional Anaesthesia United Kingdom

BELFAST 2019

Annual Scientific Meeting

Thursday 16th – Friday 17th May

'How I do it' expert clinical symposia
Upper limb | Breast | Rib fracture | Knee Arthroplasty | Hip fracture
Live demonstrations, practical pearls and evidence snippets

Service development in regional anaesthesia
Upper limb | Rib fracture | Fascia iliaca | Day-case spinal

Perioperative point of care ultrasound
Lung | Cardiac | Gastric | Airway

Expert International Faculty
Dr Ki Jinn Chin, Toronto | Dr Stephen Haskins, New York
Dr Sandy Kopp, Mayo Clinic | Dr Pia Jaeger, Denmark | Dr Jan Boublik, Stanford

Hands-on workshops | Scientific Abstracts | Infographic competition

www.ra-ukmeetings.com
#RAUK19





The Northern Ireland Society of Anaesthetists (NISA)

President: Dr Bob Darling

Honorary Secretary: Dr Killian McCourt

[The Northern Ireland Society of Anaesthetists](#) provides a forum for the educational, academic and social interests of anaesthetists in Northern Ireland. A number of meetings are held throughout the year. Of these, the highlights are the Annual Study Day and the Dundee Medal (registrar's prize).

This year's [Annual Study Day](#) will take place on Friday 1 March 2019 at the Hilton Templepatrick Hotel. A full, varied programme has been arranged with local, national and international speakers. It is hoped that the programme will appeal to anaesthetists of all grades from hospitals throughout Northern Ireland, providing a great opportunity to meet with friends and colleagues.

Programme includes:

The role of the coroner and preparation for inquests

- Mr P McGurgan, Coroner, Coroners Service for Northern Ireland.
- Dr Gemma Andrew, Coroners Medical Officer, Coroners Service for Northern Ireland.
- Dr Brian Herron, Consultant Neuropathologist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT).

Can perioperative anaesthesiology or analgesia interventions during cancer surgery influence recurrence or metastasis?

- Professor Donal Buggy, Mater Hospital, Dublin.

Applications of high-flow nasal oxygen

- Apnoeic oxygenation with high-flow nasal cannulae – Dr Craig Lyons, St James' Hospital, Dublin.
- High-flow nasal oxygenation (HFNO) in awake craniotomy – Dr Catriona Kelly, BHSCT.
- HFNO in special needs dental surgery – Dr Caroline Curry, BHSCT.

TIVA guidelines

- Dr Alastair Nimmo, The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

What can we learn from 'POPULAR'?

- Professor Manfred Blobner, Technical University of Munich.

The results of POPULAR (POstanaesthesia PULmonary complications After use of muscle Relaxants in Europe), a major prospective observational European study supported by the [European Society of Anaesthesiology \(ESA\)](#) and led by the [Technical University of Munich \(TUM\)](#), were published recently in *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*.

Blood matters

- Dr Damien Carson, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT).

Northern Ireland Specialist Transport and Retrieval (NISTAR):

Establishing a single specialist transport and critical care retrieval service for Northern Ireland

- Dr Brian Mullan, BHSCT.

Critical Care and Anaesthetics Group Northern Ireland (CCAGNI) breakout session

- For SAS doctors – Dr Emma Stiby, BHSCT.

Full details of the meeting are on the [NISA website](#). An 'early bird' registration rate is available until 15 February 2019 for NISA members.

For further information please visit the [NISA website](#) or contact the NISA Honorary Secretary, Dr Killian McCourt.



NIOAN Committee members (left to right): Dr Kathryn Spence (Antrim Hospital), Dr Damian Hughes (Ulster Hospital), Dr Sinead McGurk (Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital) and Dr Richard Laird (Altnagelvin Hospital)

The Northern Ireland Obstetric Anaesthesia Network

The [Northern Ireland Obstetric Anaesthesia Network \(NIOAN\)](#) was founded in 2015 and includes anaesthetic representation from each of the trusts with obstetric units in Northern Ireland. Its aim is to develop close relationships between obstetric anaesthetists in the region and to foster education and discussion on issues related to obstetric anaesthesia. We hold quarterly committee meetings, which are currently chaired by Dr Damien Hughes.

In addition, NIOAN has adopted the College approved annual obstetric study day which had for many years been organised by the Northern Ireland Society of Anaesthetists (NISA) obstetric group. NIOAN has now run two successful events with this year's meeting planned for 12 April 2019. We are hoping for another success with a fantastic line-up of speakers. In the past we have had excellent attendance from both trainees and consultants, and received very positive feedback. At our most recent meeting we opened attendance to our obstetric colleagues and this year we would like to announce an invitation to our midwifery and nursing colleagues.

Our most recent study day began with the competitive trainee oral presentation session, where trainees present either an interesting case, audit or quality improvement project. The most recent winner was Dr Helen Murray who represented Ulster Hospital. She presented a decade of experience with Remifentanyl PCA for labour analgesia. The middle session consisted of local consultant specialists from Northern Ireland educating us on relevant neurological, cardiac and renal disease in pregnancy. This was very informative and useful for our clinical practice. In the final session Dr Terry Tan and Dr Anne Doherty, both from Dublin, spoke about ultrasound in the labour ward and pyrexia in the parturient respectively, followed by Dr Dave Gabbott from Gloucester who presented the evidence on optimising CPR success in pregnancy.



In May 2018 we were delighted to host the Obstetric Anaesthetists' Association's (OAA) Annual Scientific Meeting in Belfast. This international meeting was incredibly successful attracting delegates from all over the world. A wide range of both local and international speakers covered diverse topics such as neonatal outcomes, communication on labour ward and medical conditions in pregnancy.

Looking to the future, our next study day is on 12 April 2019 in the Hilton Hotel in Templepatrick. [Booking is now open through our website](#) and we hope to see you there.

Dr Richard Laird, Regional Advisor Anaesthesia, Northern Ireland



Light at the end of the tunnel

Wellbeing – the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.

Sadly, these may not be the first words many of us would use to describe ourselves. Indeed a recent survey on the effects of fatigue in trainee anaesthetists found exhaustion to be prevalent. Over 60 per cent reported that work negatively impacted on their physical or psychological health and personal relationships.¹ This mirrors the findings of a College survey conducted in 2017 which estimated that 85 per cent of anaesthetists in training are at higher risk of burnout.²

85%

of anaesthetists in training are
at **higher risk of burnout**



To non-medics, doctors can appear to have it all. Success. Money. Job satisfaction. But when you're training it is easy to feel duped by this image at times. We work long hours for much less pay than people imagine. We carry a heavy burden of responsibility. We miss important life events to ensure rotas are covered and patients are kept safe. On top of which we are required to fulfil assessments, conduct audits and pass challenging postgraduate exams in order to progress. All at the same time, attempting to keep our personal lives in check. Many of these pressures are not new to medics, but the system in which we work has changed. Junior doctors are undoubtedly much more anonymous now than ever before. And shift work patterns makes socialising with colleagues (allowing opportunities for unofficial debriefing and collective de-stressing) much more difficult.

Anaesthetists are central to much of the activity within the hospital around the clock. Shift work therefore forms a significant portion of an anaesthetist in training's duties. It is well recognised that nightshift work contributes to fatigue, sleep deprivation and has negative health consequences.

Despite this, at the College's recent listening events held across the UK, no anaesthetist in training reported to have any regret in choosing anaesthesia as a specialty.² This is testament to the positive aspects of anaesthetics as a specialty. The variable nature of the work, and the clinical challenges we encounter on most shifts make for a profoundly rewarding job.

It is however, widely accepted, that the FRCA exams are particularly challenging. And there is no denying that this impacts heavily on trainee wellbeing, being cited as the major issue impacting on work life balance of trainees.²

In light of this, we as trainees (particularly those in the midst of exams) may sometimes need to be reminded that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Exam periods will pass. Assessments will be completed. Work patterns will eventually stabilize, allowing more time to focus on you and those close to you.

In the meantime, try to look after yourself. Look after each other. Talk to friends and family. Talk to colleagues – they have been there, or will be there in the future. Offer friendship and support to your colleagues. Know your mentors in your department and use them without fear of judgement. Asking for help is not an admission of failure or a sign of weakness. It is a healthy and positive step to maintain your wellbeing.

It is heartening to see that both the College and the Association of Anaesthetists have trainee wellbeing firmly on their agendas, with many processes already being implemented to promote wellbeing and tackle fatigue and burnout.

There is a range of information and resources to help – please take a look:

- [RCoA – Career and Personal Difficulties.](#)
- [Association of Anaesthetists – Wellbeing and Support.](#)

References

- 1 McClelland L et al. A national survey of the effects of fatigue on trainees in anaesthesia in the UK. *Anaesth* 2017;**72**(9):1069–1077 (bit.ly/2WveKcP).
- 2 A report on the welfare, morale and experiences of anaesthetists in training: the need to listen. RCoA 2017 (bit.ly/RCoAWelfare).

Dr Niamh Sweeney, Trainee Representative, RCoA Northern Irish Board

Royal College of Anaesthetists

Churchill House, 35 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4SG
020 7092 1500 | info@rcoa.ac.uk | www.rcoa.ac.uk/northernireland

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2019

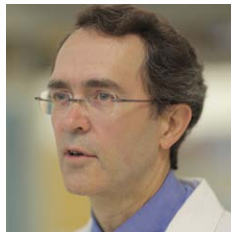
20–22 May | etc.venues St Paul's, London

The opioid epidemic:
A disaster in waiting?



Dr Cathy Stannard
NHS Gloucestershire
CCG

Developmental
anaesthetic neurotoxicity



Professor Hugh Hemmings
*British Journal of
Anaesthesia*

The future of
anaesthesia



Professor Ramani Moonsinghe
University College
London Hospitals

Improving outcomes after
emergency laparotomy



Professor Rupert Pearse
Bart's and the London
School of Medicine &
Dentistry, Queen Mary

Perioperative anaemia
and IV iron



Dr Sonya McKinlay
Glasgow Royal
Infirmary

Fitness, exercise
and surgery



Professor Denny Levett
University of Southampton and
University Hospital Southampton

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