



Response from the Neuro Anaesthesia & Critical Care Society (NACCS):

The Neuro Anaesthesia and Critical Care Society council has discussed the issue of the Scope of AA Practice in Neurosurgery. The conclusion is that the AA role would have a negative impact on the training of neuro anaesthetists and would most probably be seen as not financially viable on account for them to be directly supervised.

The key reasons are as follows:

1. Training for residents in neuro anaesthesia is already pressurised and AA presence in the environment would have a negative impact upon this. The supervision and training of the AA would impact negatively upon resident training.
2. There is a strongly held opinion that the complexity would require 1:1 supervision and hence this would provide a limited reduction in cognitive load or provide rest for the Anaesthetist
3. The current working pattern of the AA is within standard working hours, as neurosurgical cases very commonly run beyond these hours, the AA would not provide meaningful support for the cases.
4. From an economic perspective, the requirement for 1:1 supervision of the AA would bring into question the economic viability of the role.

In the current incarnation, the AA is trained to provide anaesthesia support, to help alleviate deficits in the anaesthesia workforce; in some situations this has resulted in less than 1:1 supervision. This is not appropriate in the neuro anaesthesia setting. What may be beneficial to the neuro anaesthetist would be assistance with drug and theatre preparation and completion of documentation. This would certainly help reduce fatigue and allow the anaesthetist to concentrate on their clinical role, it is however not the role that AA is currently being trained for, nor would be expecting to delivery. Given the financial climate, this may be seen as an expense that could not be supported.

Council members who have worked with AAs outside of the neuro theatre environment acknowledge the support given by them.

Dr Craig Carroll

President NACCS