FROM THE PRESIDENT

Francis Report 2 – what does this mean for you as perioperative practitioners

“We need a patient centred culture, no tolerance of non compliance with fundamental standards, openness and transparency, candour to patients, strong cultural leadership and caring, compassionate nursing, and useful and accurate information about services”

Robert Francis QC 2013

Following on from my message in the January/February 2013 issue of the Journal of Perioperative Practice we have now seen the release of the second report from Robert Francis QC (2013) with his recommendations following the enquiry into the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. If you haven’t read this report yet I strongly urge you to at least read the press statement which I am sure will move you and prompt you to reflect on the daily care you deliver in practice. I have included the link information below to make it easier for you to find as well as the link for the full report.

There are five main areas which Francis recommends need addressing in order to try to ensure this does not occur in the future. These are:

1. To structure clearly understood fundamental standards and measures of compliance, accepted and embraced by the public and healthcare professionals, with rigorous and clear means of enforcement.
2. Openness, transparency and candour throughout the system.
3. Improved support for compassionate caring and committed nursing.
4. Strong and patient centred healthcare leadership.
5. Accurate, useful and relevant information.

So what can you do as perioperative practitioners to support these five areas?

1. Francis states that there should be agreed minimum standards of care for patients which healthcare practitioners should comply with. These standards will be set by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) in conjunction with the relevant professional and patient organisations. As you know AfPP have produced Standards and Recommendations for Safe Perioperative Practice (2011) which you can utilise within your department as guidance to ensure that your patients are receiving the standard of care required. If you do not have these within your departments you should be encouraging your managers to purchase a copy. We as an association will be looking to work with NICE regarding the use of these standards within the perioperative environment nationally.

2. Francis states that there should be a culture of openness for concerns and complaints to be raised freely and fearlessly and for questions to be answered truthfully. This links very well with AfPP’s “speak up speak out” campaign from our 2011 congress. I encourage you to revitalise this campaign to ensure that concerns regarding patient care and safety are heard within your departments. Francis wants “gagging clauses” to be lifted to allow staff to feel able to highlight these issues so that they can be addressed not hidden. He also states that all patients have a right to know if something has gone wrong with their care so it is your responsibility that this happens for your patients.

3. This goes back to my original message in the Jan/Feb edition with regard to the NHS constitution and of the six C’s: Care, Compassion, Competence, Communication, Courage and Commitment (Commissioning Board Chief Nursing Officer & DH Chief Nursing Adviser 2012). It is the responsibility of every one of you as practitioners to ensure that you deliver care based on these six values. But it doesn’t stop there you must also ensure that your colleagues from all disciplines and trainee practitioners also follow and live up to these values. He also emphasises the valued work undertaken by healthcare support workers and the need to ensure they are trained and regulated properly to ensure protection of patients. You need to therefore ensure your healthcare support workers receive the relevant training and education to undertake the roles they are given.

4. Francis emphasises the importance of strong leadership in the delivery of safe patient care and has put forward the need to strengthen and develop the leaders within the NHS through the formation of an NHS leadership staff college. For those of you in or aspiring to go into leadership positions I encourage you to access training and development to assist you in developing the right skills as these are essential in the day to day running of your theatres and departments.

5. Here the emphasis is on the accurate recording of data and also the importance of collating and analysing that data to assist in the improvement of patient care. As practitioners you are required to keep accurate records for patients (NMC2008, HCPC 2012). This is particularly important when things go wrong to ensure that lessons can be learnt for future practice. We all know how irritating and time consuming data collection and audit can be but it is important that we undertake this as practitioners to ensure we can measure the effectiveness of the care we deliver to our patients.

I hope you will all take on board the importance as individuals in ensuring that we address the implications of the Francis Report 2 (2013) in your daily activities as perioperative practitioners so you can shape the future care received by patients in your care.

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References
The Association for Perioperative Practice 2011 Standards and Recommendations for Safe Perioperative Practice Harrogate, AFPP
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