



PFET IN SPINAL SURGERY
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF AOA, NSA AND SSA
BY TELECONFERENCE ON TUESDAY 31 MARCH 2009
COMMENCING AT 7.30PM (AEDT)

1. WELCOME

1.1 Present and apologies

Present: John Batten (AOA President)
Graeme Brazenor (SSA Vice President and Secretary)
Mark Davies (NSA Vice President)
John Laidlaw (NSA SET Board Chair)
Peter McCombe (SSA President)
Glenn McCulloch (RACS representative)
Michael Murphy (NSA President)
John North (AOA Past President)

Apologies: Eric Guazzo (NSA Past President)
Gordon Morrison (AOA Past Director of Training)

In attendance: Ian Burgess (AOA CEO)
Annie Gibbins (AOA National Education Manager)
Stacie Gull (NSA Executive Director)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Glenn McCulloch declared that he was attending the meeting in the capacity as a representative of RACS.

Peter McCombe declared a commercial relationship with a medical device company.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

The meeting agreed that it would be appropriate to rotate the role of Chairman of the meeting and any future meetings, and that it would be appropriate to alternate between the Presidents of AOA and NSA.

The meeting agreed that John Batten Chair the meeting.

4. INITIAL DISCUSSION

Peter McCombe outlined the ability of both specialties – orthopaedics and neurosurgery – to contribute to the management of spinal conditions, but expressed concern regarding young surgeons, particularly neurosurgeons, undertaking complex spinal surgery. Orthopaedic surgeons did not have exposure to the same quantity of spinal surgery during their training and therefore tended to only perform complex spinal surgery following the subsequent completion of a fellowship.

Michael Murphy considered that the NSA training program was very good in relation to spinal surgery, however there was room for improvement for 10-20% of trainees, for whom PFET would benefit.

Peter McCombe indicated that SSA was happy to assist the development of a multi-disciplinary approach to PFET for spinal surgery. The bio-mechanical/musculoskeletal understanding and knowledge was an area of potential improvement for young neurosurgeons.

Michael Murphy acknowledged that bio-mechanics had been deficient in the past but this had been addressed through ASMs and significant progress had been made in the NSA's training program in

recent years. NSA was happy with its SET program in relation to spinal training and PFET presented the opportunity to provide training in the more complex areas.

John Batten advised that AOA was interested in PFET but considered it beneficial to examine the SET training program.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING (NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA)

5.1 Quote for data from DoH on the number of spinal procedures

Peter McCombe advised that a quote should be available in the near future.

Michael Murphy undertook to provide the details of a contact in the Department of Health and Ageing.

5.2 Circulation of views of Bill Sears

The meeting noted that it would be valuable for the work of Bill Sears to be circulated in a written form.

5.3 Development of an MOU

The meeting noted that it was not yet appropriate to develop an MOU between AOA and NSA regarding PFET.

6. SET ELOG DATA

The meeting noted that the deficiencies in the orthopaedic elog data resulted in the data being unusable for detailed comparisons or analysis.

Ian Burgess advised that there was difficulty accessing the orthopaedic data in all states, different systems were used in some areas and that there appeared to be some inconsistency in the submission of elogs in some cases. These problems had been addressed.

7. SET CURRICULUM REVIEW

John Batten advised that AOA was undertaking a thorough review of the SET curriculum in all areas, including spinal surgery. Options were also being examined to proactively identify trainees with an interest in spinal surgery.

8. NEXT STEPS

All representatives expressed a desire to cooperate on the development of PFET in spinal surgery.

NSA did not wish to lose momentum and would continue to progress the development of its PFET program.

NSA would also be happy to conduct scientific meetings with SSA.

The meeting agreed that a further meeting should be held in three months' time. This would enable the review of more complete elog data and progress of AOA's review of its SET curriculum.