

A newsletter for anaesthetists in Northern Ireland

February 2020



Dr Darrell Lowry

Welcome to the winter newsletter of the RCoA Northern Irish Board

As I write, the local Assembly has just been restored, and after three years of stagnation we have a new Health Minister. The Board wish Mr Robin Swann well in his new role, and have invited him to meet with us and the RCoA President in the near future. Hopefully there will now be some progress in relation to the myriad of issues facing the NHS here – restoring pay parity with the rest of the UK, implementing the recommendations of the Bengoa review, reducing the waiting lists and investing in mental health provision are just some of the items in his in tray.

The Northern Irish Board met in Belfast last October 2019. We were delighted to welcome the College's newly elected Vice President, Dr Fiona Donald, to our meeting. The College also has a new CEO, Jonathan Brüün, and we look forward to working with him in the future. We have also recently have elections for new Consultant members to join the Board. Congratulations go to the successful candidates – Dr Will Donaldson (Northern Trust) was re-elected for a second term of office. Drs Sinead McGurk (Belfast Trust) and Cheryl Turkington (Western Trust) have been co-opted onto the Board as new Consultant members. I look forward to working with them all, and I am pleased that the Board has good representation from all five of our local Trusts. One of our current workstreams is to try to standardise the cardiac arrest telephone number in our local hospitals to 2222 – this is now the standard number in the rest of the UK, Republic of Ireland, and most of Europe. Further information will follow in the next few months. Another of the new College initiatives is the establishment of the Centre for Perioperative Care (CPOC). Locally, Perioperative Medicine is developing fast, and our Perioperative team in the Belfast City Hospital have written a feature on the Advanced Perioperative Medicine fellowship which we run. We have also articles on other advanced training opportunities available within the [School of Anaesthesia](#).

In this edition of the newsletter we have an article from the President of the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland, about the historic relationship between anaesthetists in the island of Ireland. Some of you will also be Fellows of the Irish College, and will no doubt be aware of the links. Both Dr Kinirons and myself are keen to maintain the close ties and co-operation between the two Colleges, as he mentions in [his article](#).

The School of Anaesthesia here are entering a busy period of the year – CT 1 recruitment was at the end of January, followed by ST3 recruitment in April. Meanwhile the various sittings of the FRCA examinations continue throughout the year, followed by the ARCP panels in June. I would like to thank all of you who contribute to the work of the School – it is very much appreciated by our trainees. Two of our trainees will gain their CCT in February 2020 – congratulations go to Drs Nicholas Black and Gareth Paul. Both of them have accepted Consultant posts in the Belfast Trust. Some of you may be aware that there will be a new anaesthetic curriculum introduced in 2021 – further information is available [here](#).

Also in this edition of the newsletter, we have reports from two recent meetings held recently in Northern Ireland. You can read about the [Critical Care Reviews](#) meeting and the [NIRAS regional anaesthesia meeting](#).

Finally, we have included information about forthcoming [anaesthetic meetings locally](#) which may be of interest to you.

I hope that you enjoy the newsletter. If you would like to contribute to a future edition, or you have anything that you would like to see included, please get in touch at dlowry@rcoa.ac.uk

Best wishes,

Dr Darrell Lowry

Chair, RCoA Northern Irish Board



Advanced Training Update

In the last newsletter, we heard from our senior trainees who undertook out of programme clinical fellowships in Toronto and Perth. It is great to have our trainees and young Consultants represented around the world, returning with expertise to contribute to training and development of trainees in the Northern Ireland Anaesthesia training programme.

The anaesthesia curriculum requires 1 year of “advanced” training. This is to develop expertise in specialist clinical areas of interest and extend non-clinical skills in preparation for consultant practice. The overseas clinical fellowships can fulfil curriculum requirements but trainees must complete the last 6 months of training in UK. For many trainees it is not possible to take time away from Northern Ireland. A number of hospitals within the region have developed clinical fellowships for trainees to develop areas of expertise locally. The clinical fellowship posts are advertised through the School of Anaesthesia and require CV application and competitive interview for appointment. By nature of the location of subspecialties, most are in Belfast Trust.

Advanced Pain Medicine Training

Having both recently completed our advanced Pain Medicine training (APT), we thought we’d share our experiences and thoughts on the year.

Though 12 months of pain medicine may seem excessive, it does not take long to realise it is barely enough. To gain as much experience as possible you will have the opportunity to spend time in different hospitals. This is one of the huge benefits of the year; pain medicine is a highly varied specialty, both in terms of conditions seen and management options available. Spending time in different departments definitely helps to broaden experience and develop your own style. As the fellow, you have the opportunity to focus learning wherever you see fit, with the chance to spend time training in radiology, neurosurgery and palliative care as well as with Allied Health Professionals (AHP) such as physiotherapists and psychologists.

Day to day clinical work gives great opportunity for gaining expertise in clinical procedural skills, as well as communication. We both loved the contrast between the subtlety of a difficult consultation, and the satisfaction of performing targeted interventions.

Pain as a specialty is changing, we believe for the better. We have both been privileged to work with highly skilled and motivated colleagues in BCH and UHD, throughout the year. Their enthusiasm has been infectious. The advent of the Faculty of Pain and the introduction of the fellowship exam (a written paper (MCQ/SBA/EMQ) followed by a viva) has helped to standardise practice. To help with our learning we attended multiple teaching sessions, both local and national, and had access to monthly APT Updates via distance learning. There is no shortage of friendly educational resources.

If you are still reading, you must have a glimmer of interest, and if so, get it touch! We would be more than happy to answer any questions or dispel any myths!

Dr Rachel Irwin

ST7 Pain Fellow

Dr Nathan Oliver

ST7 Pain Fellow (August 2018–2019)

Dr Conor Farrell

Regional Advisor for Pain Medicine, UHD

Clinical Fellowship in Perioperative Medicine

The Belfast Trust has offered a six month fellowship in perioperative medicine, based at the Belfast City Hospital, since 2018.

The fellowship offers opportunity to advance clinical skills in pre-assessment and theatre anaesthetic management, and enhanced recovery for tertiary cancer patients, colorectal, upper GI and gynae-oncology surgery. Close links have been established with the surgeons. The fellow contributes to pre-op assessment clinics, joint post-operative ward rounds and MDT meetings.

Links have been developed with the national groups including the Trainees with an Interest in Perioperative Medicine (TRIPOM) group. The fellow is invited to become the Northern Ireland representative on the committee, which opens opportunities to contribute to national conferences and gives access to a wealth of resources for professional development. Past and current fellows have been invited to attend national study days including the perioperative leads study day and the PQUIP collaborate day at the Royal College of Anaesthetists, London. There are also a number of national conferences at various times of the year to showcase your work.

There are no formal requirements to undertake exams to achieve the advanced perioperative medicine module, however there are opportunities for further education including a Master Degree offered by University College, London and Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

The perioperative medicine fellowship allows completion of the advanced perioperative module of the curriculum, but also develops clinical and non-clinical skills in specialist areas of interest and better preparation for life as a consultant. There is also plenty of opportunity to lead teaching, both local and trust wide. There is great job satisfaction working closely with the MDT and seeing how their work, and your contribution as the fellow, has a positive impact on patient care.

Dr Alison Blair

ST7 POM Fellow, BCH

Dr Claire Barker

Perioperative Medicine Lead, BCH

Advanced Training in Regional Anaesthesia

Regional anaesthesia (RA) in Belfast has been developing at quite a pace over the last few years. There is a growing Consultant body of international experts working in NI and an established society, the Northern Ireland Regional anaesthesia Society (NIRAS) running recognised RA-UK courses. Introduction of a dedicated RA clinical fellowship in 2019, in addition to the established trauma anaesthesia fellowship was an obvious step to avail of such expertise for trainees.

Belfast is optimally placed to provide advanced RA training with a huge scope of regional exposure. The Royal Victoria and Musgrave Park hospitals are some of the largest in the UK; the former providing emergency trauma services and the latter the elective arthroplasty service.

Clinically, both fellowships offer experience in all types of peripheral nerve blockade; including upper limb, lower limb and truncal blocks. This includes regular exposure to upper limb block rooms; a key objective being a mastery of the techniques utilised to facilitate awake surgery.

The fellowships have also allowed us to develop services, improve clinical pathways and take on key teaching roles in the department and at a regional level. This included quality teaching utilising cutting edge 3-D printing to provide high-fidelity phantoms for the practice of RA techniques. This combined with live scanning and expert consultant back-up provides exceptionally valuable training.

Both fellowships have been excellent preparation for further career development through completion of the European Diploma in Regional Anaesthesia and the MSc in RA through the University of East Anglia.

Overall it has been an excellent year, working within expert and efficient teams who, as a bonus, are a pleasure to work with!

Dr Ryan Sykes

ST7 Anaesthetist and Trauma Anaesthesia Fellow

Dr Sean Shevlin

ST6 Anaesthetist and Re Regional Fellow Supervising Consultant

Dr Lloyd Turbitt

Supervising Consultant for Regional Anaesthesia Fellow

Dr Robbie Thorpe

Supervising Consultant for Trauma Anaesthesia Fellow

College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland and Northern Ireland

There has been a long standing tradition of co-operation in the speciality of Anaesthesiology, at both scientific and professional levels, between the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland (CAI) and Northern Ireland. The Faculty of Anaesthetists of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland was founded as an all-Ireland faculty in 1959. The Fellowship, FFA RCSI was instituted in 1961. The first honorary fellowship awarded by the newly formed faculty was to Sir Ivan Magill (perhaps the most famous son of Northern Irish anaesthesia). The College of Anaesthetists in Ireland was founded in 1998, and in 2000 they purchased their premises in 22 Merrion Square North, Dublin. The Fellowship enjoyed reciprocity with the FCRA, with the result that many Northern Irish Fellows elected to take the FFA RCSI exam. To this day, over 250 of our Fellows work in the Northern Ireland.

Professor J W Dundee and Dr S H S Love, both from Northern Ireland, were not only foundation Fellows but were elected to serve on the board of the newly formed faculty. Both Professor Dundee and Dr. Love subsequently served as Deans of the faculty. This marked the beginning of a long tradition of colleagues from the Northern Ireland serving as Deans of the Faculty of Anaesthetists RCSI, and most recently in the case of Professor Fee as President of the College of Anaesthetists. This list includes:

- Professor J W Dundee 1970–1973
- Dr S H S Love 1976–1979
- Dr G W Black 1982–1985
- Professor R J S Clark 1991–1994
- Dr J Cooper 1994–1997
- Professor H Fee 2003–2006

In addition, many colleagues from Northern Ireland have served with great distinction on CAI Council, as examiners, as members of various committees, and in the day to day life of the College. The Scientific relationships were fostered between the two jurisdictions with many trainees from the South spending time engaged in training and research in the Northern Ireland. Professional movement such as this continues to this day.

In more recent years, with the loss of exam reciprocity, the presence of Northern Ireland anaesthetists in the CAI has been less evident. The last elected Council member from Northern Ireland was Dr Gerry Browne. My ambition as President of the CAI is to strengthen the ties between the North and South. We have much common interest and history. The College has been richer for its association with our colleagues in Northern Ireland and my ambition is that this link will not only prosper but will strengthen in the years ahead. The Chair of the RCoA Northern Irish Advisory Board is a co-opted member of the CAI Council, and both the previous and current Chairs, Dr Bob Darling and Dr Darrell Lowry, have attended our Council meetings. Similarly, the President and CEO of the CAI are also co-opted members of the NI Advisory Board, and we have attended their meetings in Belfast.

Dr Brian Kinirons

President

College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland

22 Merrion Square North

Dublin 2 Ireland

anaesthesia.ie



Eighth Critical Care Review Meeting

Belfast last week welcomed more than 400 scientists, health specialists and medical experts from around the world as part of the Critical Care Reviews conference. It took place over full two days at Titanic Belfast, organised by Critical Care Reviews, a not-for-profit educational critical care project promoting open access to scientific advancement, set up by local clinician, Dr Rob Mac Sweeney.

Conference delegates met to hear the results of three ground-breaking clinical trial results, and a major international epidemiological sepsis study, which will have global research implications.

Now in its eighth year, the Critical Care Reviews Meeting has grown to establish itself as one of the world's best conferences in the field of intensive care medicine.

Dr Rob Mac Sweeney, said:

"Critical Care Reviews has established itself as a world-leading medical conference and the premier scientific event for specialists around the world working within the area of critical care. A key aim of Critical Care Reviews is to make scientific discovery accessible to all and the data being presented at the conference underscores our efforts to promote research and scientific advancement in this complex area of medicine. The year we also supported our first delegate from a low income country, Dr Diptesh Aryal travelled from Nepal to attend."



Northern Ireland Regional Anaesthesia Society (NIRAS) – Basic Regional Anaesthesia Course

NIRAS Basic Regional Anaesthesia (RA) course is a one-day course, which was held on Monday 20 January 2020. It was aimed at those with limited experience with ultrasound guided RA. The course setting was the beautiful Oxford Island, on the shore of Lough Neagh with a faculty including international experts in RA, including Dr Peter Mejavy, Dr Rosie Hogg, Dr David Johnston and Dr Lloyd Turbitt.

The basic RA course provides the opportunity for delegates to learn about the basic theory of ultrasound, and then hands –on ultrasound scanning live models in small groups.

The faculty teach several ultrasound guided basic, but incredibly useful blocks: Femoral, Popliteal, Rectus Sheath, PECS, Axillary Brachial Plexus and Erector Spinae Plane Blocks. Ultrasound guided vascular access is also included in the skill set taught.

In addition to ultrasound scanning, we provide a cutting edge phantom spine, so that delegates may practice performance of an erector spinae plane block – a real bonus for those attending.

This year was open to FY2 doctors and above, allowing budding anaesthetists to gain valuable insight into this growing sub-specialty.

Make sure to follow [@NIRASociety](https://twitter.com/NIRASociety) for updates on forthcoming course dates.



Dr Ryan Sykes
ST7, Trauma Anaesthesia Fellow
NIRAS Faculty Member

NISA Annual Study Day

Friday 13 March, 2020, Hilton Templepatrick

Provisional programme: Organiser Dr Killian McCourt

- Sustainable anaesthesia
- Fatigue
- Independent review of gross negligence manslaughter and culpable homicide
- The role of the Independent Medical Examiner
- Analgesia for rib fracture
- Regional guideline on transfer of patients with traumatic brain injury

Registration is now open at nisa.org.uk/events/studyday/registration

The advance registration rate is £125 (consultants) and £60 (all others). NISA members can avail of an 'early bird' registration rate (£100 consultants / £50 others) until 29th February 2020. To get this you will need to have login access to the Members' Section of the NISA website at nisa.org.uk/portal If you don't have access, please get in touch via nisa.org.uk/contact or admin@nisa.org.uk and it will be set up for you.

Lay representation needed for the Northern Ireland Advisory Board

We urgently need a lay representative to join the RCoA Lay Committee and represent patients on our Northern Ireland Advisory Board.

This is particularly important now that Stormont has reopened and we have a new Health Minister.

More details about this important role can be found [here](#)

Please forward this opportunity to anyone you think might be interested.

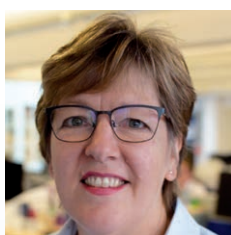


ANAESTHESIA 2020



Co-badged with:

CAI
SALUS DUM VIGILAMUS
College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland



Anaesthesia and the developing infant brain

Professor Suellen Walker,
Great Ormond Street Hospital
for Children



The WHO Surgical Safety Checklist: ten years later

Professor Alan Merry, Auckland
City Hospital, New Zealand



Hypotension, microperfusion and organ injury

Professor Christa Boer,
Amsterdam University
Medical Centre



Data Science and Artificial Intelligence for better healthcare

Professor Niels Peek, University
of Manchester



The challenges of giving your patients high quality information preoperatively

Dr Hilary Swales, Consultant
Anaesthetist and RCoA Patient
Information Lead



Aluminium toxicity

Dr Matt Wiles, Sheffield
Teaching Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust

**18–20
May 2020**

Old Trafford,
the Home of
Manchester United

