



BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the teleconference held on Tuesday 10 November 2020

Members:

Prof Mike Grocott	Chair, NIAA Board
Mrs Jenny Dorey	Royal College of Anaesthetists' Lay Committee rep
Ms Sharon Drake	Director of Clinical Quality & Research, RCoA
Prof Helen Galley	<i>British Journal of Anaesthesia</i>
Prof Judith Hall	Royal College of Anaesthetists' Council
Dr Mike Nathanson	Association of Anaesthetists

Co-opted members:

Dr Aamer Ahmed	Specialist Society Representative (2020 – 2021)
*Dr Gareth Ackland	Experimental Medicine Lead
Dr Dan Martin	Academic Training Coordinator
Prof Ramani Moonesinghe	Director, Health Services Research Centre
Dr Joyce Yeung	Deputy Director, UK Perioperative Medicine Clinical Trials Network

In attendance:

Mr Jose Lourtie	Head of Research, Royal College of Anaesthetists
Ms Pamela Hines	Committee Secretary (NIAA Coordinator)

Apologies:

Prof Andrew Klein	<i>Anaesthesia</i>
Ms Carly Melbourne	Associate Director of Clinical Quality and Research, RCoA
Prof Rupert Pearse	Director, UK Perioperative Medicine Clinical Trials Network
Prof Matt Wilson	NIAA Grants Officer

*Present for part of meeting

NIAAB/11.2020/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, noting Dr Nathanson's first attendance at this meeting as the Association's President, and Dr Ahmed's attendance as the Specialist Society Representative. Apologies were noted as above.

NIAAB/11.2020/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the joint Board & Research Council meeting held on 21 July 2020 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.

ACTION: Ms Hines to upload the confirmed non-confidential minutes of the Board & Research Council meeting held on 21 July 2020 to the NIAA website.

NIAAB/11.2020/3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

NIAAB/11.2020/4 NIAA BOARD CHAIR

Prof Grocott left the meeting for this item and Dr Nathanson led the discussion, updating members on a recent offline conversation between all 4 founding partners. This had arisen in light of Prof Grocott's first 3-year term ending as Board chair in July 2021, as well as Prof Wilson's first 3-year term ending as Grants Officer in April 2020. The partners had agreed that given the pending NIAA external review and the current uncertain circumstances it would be premature to renew the Board Chair role for a further 3-year term before any review recommendations are known or any strategy agreed. A recommendation had therefore been made to renew Prof Grocott's term as Board Chair for 1 year beyond the first term from July 2021 to July 2022, after which the external review recommendations will have been discussed and agreed and any further appointment to the role can be made. It was

also recommended that Prof Wilson be confirmed for a second 3-year term as Grants Officer, effective immediately. Members were supportive of both recommendations, and Dr Nathanson agreed to discuss the decision with Prof Grocott outside of the meeting.

ACTION: Dr Nathanson to discuss the decision re: Board Chair role with Prof Grocott.

NIAAB/11.2020/5 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON RESEARCH ACTIVITY & THE NIAA

Prof Grocott resumed the role of meeting chair and opened this discussion by advising members of the effects of the first surge on research activity due to staff redeployment and its effect on NIHR research conduct and patient recruitment, and the threat to a number of potential charitable funding streams. It was also noted that Government funding for research may likely increase but Government priorities may be different than those of the specialty itself; the outlook for the next five years is very uncertain, and short term funding is a more likely possibility at a national level at this stage. Since the first surge and its effect on lowering patient recruitment into studies this is now returning somewhat to normal, however research trainee networks being seconded to clinical duties has led to some challenges with resuming research work. Despite this there have been some successes in securing large national funding, and new appointments being made for example Dr Martin's appointment as Chair of Anaesthesia in Plymouth. Prof Grocott also noted that the NIHR Associate PI Scheme will lead to greater formal acknowledgement of trainees' contributions. Dr Nathanson noted it was positive to see a healthy number of applications to the most recent grant round, and the Association/Anaesthesia had seen an increase in abstract submissions demonstrating that not all activity on the ground has stopped. Dr Ahmed noted the important balance between a COVID and non-COVID steer and the difficulties in finding patients for studies, however is positive that the ambition is still there. Dr Martin noted a pushback from R&D departments on certain projects as they are focusing on COVID trials. Dr Ackland noted it was important not to lose sight of the fact that we are living through medical history which will impact early career researchers and medical students more greatly, and may have a positive impact in encouraging people to enter academic research. It was deemed as important to highlight the NIAA's contribution to the studies that are currently ongoing and adopted to the portfolio, as well as work happening on the global scale some of which is supported by the NIAA – perhaps by using the website. Ms Dorey noted the opportunities there are also to spread the message of support for research trials to the general public during this time, and Dr Nathanson agreed that increasing public support for anaesthesia and critical care and the pivotal role that the specialties have played during the pandemic is important. Members agreed that making the most of these opportunities to highlight the role of anaesthetists and critical care in supporting patients and contributing to research during this time may help redress some negative press, and encourage those who may be considering pursuing medical or academic careers in anaesthesia and critical care. It was agreed this will require collaboration between both the College and the Association as well as journals and other publications, to promote both academic and clinical work as well as personal stories which are important to engage the public. Dr Nathanson suggested he should engage in discussions with Prof Mahajan on joint communications from the Association and the RCoA to highlight these positive contributions going forward.

ACTION: Dr Nathanson to discuss with Prof Mahajan joint positive communications on anaesthesia and critical care throughout COVID

NIAAB/11.2020/6 NIAA EXTERNAL REVIEW

Prof Grocott noted that activity on this project had unfortunately been largely paused due to difficulties in securing panel members' time during the pandemic, some of whom have had to step back due to other commitments. He mentioned that although it has been accepted that the review will largely be conducted virtually it may be necessary to consider an alternative panel, due to availability of original members. It was noted that Bruce Keogh is still prepared to chair the process at this stage. It is hoped that the review can take place in the early part of 2021.

NIAAB/11.2020/7 ANAESTHESIA RESEARCH 2020

Ms Hines provided an update on the upcoming event which would be taking place virtually due to the pandemic. It was noted that the event included content and input from all founding partners as well as the HSRC and POMCTN. Under the circumstances it would be a 1-day event this year, with the ambition to return to a face-to-face 2-day event in 2021 if it is at all safe and possible to do so. Delegate registrations had been steadily increasing since opening for bookings in October and there

were just under 100 delegates signed up at this stage; Ms Hines requested that members continue to assist with promoting the event where possible. The format of this meeting will be a mixture of pre-recorded presentations, with live Q&A on the day with each session chaired by members of NIAA Board and Research Council. The College Events team have been involved in organising the logistics and technicalities of the day alongside Ms Hines. Feedback will be shared with the Board in the New Year once the post-event delegate survey responses had been collected.

NIAAB/11.2020/8 NIAA GRANTS

Prof Wilson had submitted a written report to the Board in his absence, providing an update on grants activities. This included data on the large number of applications submitted to Round 2 which had been the only grants round completed this year, due to the suspension of Round 1 during the peak of the pandemic earlier in the year. There had been 40 applications submitted requesting £1.4m, which were currently undergoing peer review and would be discussed and finalised at the committee meeting in December. No further questions or comments were made.

NIAAB/11.2020/9 RCoA SMALL RESEARCH GRANTS

Ms Hines gave an update on the College grants scheme for information, which had received a much smaller number of applications this year. The 3 submissions had been reviewed and scored by Dr Plaat from the OAA and Dr Ahmed from ACTACC who had made decisions to fund one application, request further information on another, whilst the third application had been rejected. Both reviewers were thanked for their contributions to the process.

NIAAB/11.2020/10 BOC AWARD 2020

Prof Hall gave members a brief verbal outline of the current status of the BOC Award, which had been reopened in the summer following the pause on activity earlier in the year. 7 applications had been received and were being reviewed by the original panel, with an interview date set for January 2021.

NIAAB/11.2020/11 MACINTOSH PROFESSOR 2020

All members agreed that the two highest ranking applicants should be supported and nominated for this award. Prof Moonesinghe highlighted the importance of this support for academics in the current circumstances, being even more necessary at this time. Both applications were felt to be very different, and worth supporting. Ms Drake reminded members that this decision needs to be presented to the College Nominations committee for final ratification.

ACTION: Ms Hines to submit Macintosh Professor candidates to Nominations Committee for ratification

NIAAB/11.2020/12 EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Prof Moonesinghe gave an update on the working group's activities since it was convened and published its recommendations at the start of the pandemic, noting the importance of EDI in the context of Covid, given how increased pressures will have an impact on individuals that have caring responsibilities, as well as other factors that will start to take a toll. It was also noted that the recent withdrawal of the Athena Swan lever on University funding has meant that there is no longer any initiative to take the issue of EDI as seriously as may have been previously perceived. Prof Moonesinghe suggested that the NIAA's EDI report should be relaunched and republished with an addendum in light of these factors, and given the change in the external climate. Members discussed their thoughts on these changes, including comments on the effectiveness of the Athena Swan Awards overall and whether it continues to have a role to play in achieving what was originally intended, or had become more of a box-ticking exercise and if a new system would address the issues of EDI more effectively. All were in agreement that these changes could be a good signal of change on a larger scale. Prof Hall mentioned the work she is undertaking with the College's equality research project group, and invited Prof Moonesinghe to discuss this issue further with this committee. Prof Moonesinghe also mentioned her position on the UK Clinical Research Collaborative Board, and proposed engaging with other Colleges through the Academy on this subject to reach a broader audience and discuss the subject more widely for a collective response. It was also suggested that

a journal publication discussing some of these issues would be useful to take this further. Ms Drake and Dr Nathanson suggested revisiting the original report as a starting point, inviting NIAA partners to check which of the recommendations have been achieved or are currently underway as well as convening a working group to start working through and delivering some of the recommendations. It was suggested that a meeting should be convened in 2021 for a roundtable discussion between the various relevant parties including the Intensive Care Society, journals, and surgical research groups on how to take this matter forward in a practical way.

ACTION: Prof Hall to invite Prof Moonesinghe to discuss this issue with RCoA EDI committee

ACTION: Prof Moonesinghe to explore engaging the UK Clinical Research Collaborative and/or other Colleges to collate and take forward a joint response to current issues of EDI

NIAAB/11.2020/13 NIHR SPECIALTY GROUP ANAESTHESIA, PERIOPERATIVE MEDICINE & PAIN

Prof Grocott gave an update on the specialty group, noting the difficulties currently being experienced by CRNs and in setting up new studies as resources are being diverted elsewhere. Although some of the larger studies have now restarted and are continuing to recruit, albeit at a lower level than previously. Prof Grocott will be stepping down from his position as National Specialty Lead in January 2021 due to a new role within the NIHR; interviews for his successor will be taking place shortly. Prof Moonesinghe pointed out that anaesthesia has been particularly affected by the current situation due to its effect on surgery and sharing resources with intensive care colleagues' means these resources are stretched and currently diverted elsewhere. These cumulative effects could set some research studies back by years. Prof Grocott suggested that similar problems are being experienced in other specialties and as had been discussed earlier some of these difficulties could be addressed through publicly championing the role that anaesthesia and critical care have played throughout the pandemic in order to attract positive attention/funding, and consideration will also need to be paid on how to support career researchers who may be more likely to continue receiving larger grants in an increasingly difficult funding environment, and will have benefit to the specialty overall.

NIAAB/11.2020/14 ACADEMIC TRAINING

Dr Martin provided an update on the Academy's Academic Leads group and the document they are in the process of producing, including recommendations for addressing the impact of COVID-19 on research and clinical academia and training in particular. The nationwide NIHR ACF/CL information gathering exercise has been completed and a guidance document submitted to the NIAA which includes signposting on where approaches should be made to discuss ACF/CL posts regionally, but will need to be brought together into a living document and tied in with the NIHR's mechanism for releasing these posts so that it remains current. Prof Grocott agreed to discuss this with Dr Martin offline.

NIAAB/11.2020/15 CLINICAL TRIALS NETWORK

Dr Yeung provided a verbal update in Prof Pearse's absence, noting the Network's requests for further funding from NIAA partners had resulted in positive confirmation of continued support from the RCoA, but were unsuccessful with regards to continued funding from the Association/Anaesthesia and the BJA. Discussions will continue with the external funder Rosetrees. Prof Pearse's term as Director will end in 2021 and is currently being advertised. Two CTN-led studies are being put forward for NIHR HTA funding towards the end of the year and into 2021. The CTN-led VITAL trial was successfully funded in July and will be proceeding to commence on time in 2021. The Network has ambition to submit more funding applications to continue support of major trials and to develop and increase the CTN Chief Investigator scheme membership.

NIAAB/11.2020/16 EQUIPOISE

Dr Yeung updated members in Prof Pearse's absence, advising that the equipoise position statement had been approved by all four founding partners and the work is being led by trainees, which has been somewhat hampered by COVID, but are still planned to go ahead with articles in the RCoA *Bulletin* and other outlets. Prof Grocott agreed this is an important piece of work for the NIAA as well as the CTN, with COVID and the aftermath providing a good opportunity to look at this issue and

communicate some of the lessons learned. Dr Nathanson noted that the statement had been supported by the Association when recently presented to its Board however commented that the Board had been surprised that decisions had already been made for publication of this work. This was noted and Prof Grocott suggested this should be taken up as the work progresses.

NIAAB/11.2020/17 HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTRE

Prof Moonesinghe updated members on HSRC activities including the NELA sixth patient report which had recently been published, and RCoA Data Analyst Ms Santos was thanked in particular for her hard work on this. NAP7 has been paused before starting however the team and the Fellows are still busy on other projects. Neither the PQIP or CASAP studies were officially paused during the height of the pandemic, but have both been struggling with recruitment since the peak has died down. It remains to be seen whether any second surge will also have any affect. 30,000 patients have been recruited to PQIP and now would be a good time to start analysing that data; Prof Moonesinghe noted her intention to liaise with Dr Yeung to discuss this to ensure it doesn't derail the VITAL study. The CASAP study continues and is reviewing its protocol and project plans. Three new HSRC Fellows were recruited in August and are working on NELA, PQIP and SNAP data analysis; SNAP-2 Trainee Lead Danny Wong has now been awarded his PhD and has published a risk assessment tools paper for SNAP-2 and would appreciate NIAA support in promoting this. A PQIP report will be published as planned in the New Year and there are intentions to run a virtual conference in 2021 to promote the HSRC's broad work and projects, ensuring to avoid any clashes with any other large conferences being planned by the College or Association.

NIAAB/11.2020/18 EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE AND DISCOVERY SCIENCE GROUP

In Dr Ackland's absence there was no update to give under this item.

NIAAB/11.2020/19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

NIAAB/11.2020/20 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- NIAA Board & Research Council, Monday 8 February 2021, 10:00 – 12:30 (followed by Exec Board meeting)
- NIAA Board, Monday 10 May 2021, 10:00 – 12:00
- NIAA Board & Research Council, Monday 19 July 2021, 10:00 – 12:30 (followed by Exec Board meeting)

ACTION POINTS

Item		Responsible	Action	Due
2	Minutes of previous meeting	Ms Hines	Upload the amended confirmed non-confidential minutes of meeting held on 21 July 2020 to the NIAA website	Next meeting
4	NIAA Board Chair	Dr Nathanson	Discuss the decision re: the Board Chair role with Prof Grocott	Next meeting
5	Impact of COVID-19 on research activity	Dr Nathanson	Discuss with Prof Mahajan joint positive communications on anaesthesia and critical care throughout COVID	2021
11	Macintosh Professor	Ms Hines	Submit Macintosh Professor candidates to Nominations Committee for ratification	ASAP
12	Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion	Prof Hall	Invite Prof Moonesinghe to discuss EDI with RCoA EDI committee	ASAP

		Prof Moonesinghe	Explore engaging various stakeholders to collate and progress a joint response to EDI issues	2021
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