



## BOARD & RESEARCH COUNCIL MEETING

### Minutes of the teleconference held on Tuesday 21 July 2020

#### **NIAA Board:**

Prof M Grocott	Chair, NIAA Board
Ms J Dorey	Royal College of Anaesthetists' Lay Committee rep
Ms S Drake	Director of Clinical Quality & Research, Royal College of Anaesthetists Association of Anaesthetists
Dr K Ferguson	<i>British Journal of Anaesthesia</i>
Prof H Galley	Royal College of Anaesthetists' Council
Prof J Hall	<i>Anaesthesia</i>
Prof A Klein	Academic Training Coordinator
Dr D Martin	Director, UK Perioperative Medicine Clinical Trials Network
Prof R Pearse	Specialist Society Representative (2019 – 2020)
Dr B Ratnayake	NIAA Grants Officer
Prof M Wilson	

#### **NIAA Research Council:**

Dr P Arnold	Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of Great Britain & Ireland
Dr J Coles	Neuro Anaesthesia & Critical Care Society
Dr K El-Boghdadly	Difficult Airway Society
Dr G Kunst	Association for Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia and Critical Care
Dr A Macfarlane	Regional Anaesthesia UK
Prof D Menon	NIHR Senior Investigator
Dr A Owen	NIAA Trainee Representative
Dr R Ramsaran	Society for Education in Anaesthesia UK
Dr B Ratnayake	British Society of Orthopaedic Anaesthetists
Dr K Samuel	Research & Audit Federation of Trainees, Chair
Dr R Mouton	Vascular Anaesthesia Society of Great Britain & Ireland
Lt Col T Woolley	Royal Centre for Defence Medicine

#### **In attendance:**

Ms P Hines	Committee Secretary (NIAA Coordinator)
Mr J Lourtie	Head of Research, Royal College of Anaesthetists
Ms C Melbourne	RCoA Associate Director of Clinical Quality & Research

#### **Apologies:**

Dr G Ackland	Experimental Medicine Lead
Dr M Davies	Association of Anaesthetists
Prof F Gao	NIHR Senior Investigator
Prof D Lambert	<i>British Journal of Anaesthesia</i>
Prof R Moonesinghe	Director, Health Services Research Centre
Dr M Nathanson	Chair, NIAA Research Council (to September 2020)
Dr F Plaet	Obstetric Anaesthetists' Association

#### **NIAAB+RC/07.2020/1**

#### **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies noted as above.

#### **NIAAB+RC/07.2020/2**

#### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Minutes of the Board meeting on 11 May 2020 were reviewed and agreed as accurate. No further comments were made.

**ACTION: Ms Hines to upload the confirmed non-confidential minutes of Board meeting held on 11 May 2020 to the NIAA website.**

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/3                    MATTERS ARISING**

No matters arising to discuss as previous actions had been completed or were to be discussed as agenda items in this meeting.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/4                    ACADEMIC TRAINING**

Dr Martin noted the progress he had made on pulling together national information on available ACF/CL posts, which is not currently widely available in one coherent place. The document is now complete with the exception of information from the devolved nations. It was discussed how best to gather this information and suggestions were made to approach the NIHR, and that going forward this information would be best placed on the NIAA website's Trainee Resources page so as to enable a coordinated approach and ease of access for trainees.

**ACTION: Dr Martin to liaise with NIHR to gather information on national ACF/CL posts, to collate and post on NIAA website**

Dr Samuel provided an update on RAFT activities, noting that progress on the RAFT national project has been deferred due to the impact of COVID-19, and is expected to resume pending the reinstatement of non-COVID research funding. RAFT have been involved in the CERA study jointly with TERN and PERUKI trainee groups, which has had the protocol accepted by the *BMJ* and a paper submitted to *Emergency Medicine Journal*. Dr Samuel was also pleased to report that the first paper on RAFT's DALES project will be published in the *BJA* within the next week and the second paper will be published within the next month. Dr Martin advised that there should be a paper on iHype ready to be submitted soon. Other than this, RAFT have been monitoring their activity closely to determine when their regular activities can resume, and plan to run some trainee surveys on inequalities in training opportunities over the coming weeks. Members offered congratulations to RAFT on the recent progress made with journal publications.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/5                    EQUIPOISE**

Prof Pearse provided an update on the task group's progress, which had been derailed somewhat through COVID. An initial meeting had been held prior to the pandemic, which involved all NIAA founding partners who had agreed to draft a short initial position statement for the NIAA to endorse. The intention for the working group is to normalise the conversation and encourage clinicians to address the issue through a combination of social media posts, journal and publication articles highlighting both positions on the subject. They also plan to conduct some mixed methods research using focus groups and interviews, and following this period of activity the group intends to draft a further position statement along with a set of recommendations. There was also discussion on whether other specialties should be involved in the project, which seems especially relevant in a post-COVID climate. It was noted that other specialties could be approached through the Academy but that doing so at this stage could be difficult to gain traction, so it was suggested that the work should continue as is and engagement with other specialties should take place at a later stage.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/6                    NIAA EXTERNAL REVIEW 2020**

Prof Grocott provided a verbal update to members on the status of the review process, which had been paused during the peak COVID period. Prof Grocott noted that the entire review could be suspended for a year until the RCoA's Anaesthesia 2021 meeting, but acknowledged there is still some uncertainty over how virtual this meeting will be and that given the current circumstances the external review will have to be largely virtual and take place over the autumn period. Prof Grocott sought approval from members to approach alternative reviewers if members of the existing panel are unable to remain involved, bearing in mind members' previous comments and concerns on the makeup of the panel and avoiding panellists that may have conflicts of interest or may not be independent enough. Prof Grocott also noted that some stakeholders may wish to revise their previously submitted contributing statement, in light of the pandemic and should be allowed to resubmit these should they wish to. Members were supportive of the points put forward and agreed that it is important to continue with the review.

**ACTION: Prof Grocott to approach alternative review panel members if necessary**

**ACTION: Ms Hines to contact NIAA stakeholders to offer opportunity to revise contributing review statements in light of COVID-19****NIAAB+RC/07.2020/7 ANAESTHESIA RESEARCH 2020**

Prof Grocott provided a verbal update and proposed that it would seem highly unlikely to be able to hold a face-to-face annual meeting before the end of the year in York as had originally been planned, suggesting that it would be feasible to plan for a virtual event however. Members discussed initial concerns over whether there could be a danger of 'virtual meeting fatigue' with the current abundance of online events, and although a virtual event may be unavoidable this year, it would be important to clarify from the outset the intentions for 2021 and ideally return to organising an in-person event next year. There was also discussion on whether the online event should be over 1 or 2 days, and if there is enough time to organise such an event in the time given. Prof Grocott acknowledged these concerns, stating that this year's EBPOM event had been organised at relatively short notice and was also conducted online. There was general support to explore this idea and acknowledgement that the success of the event would be dependent on the commitment of all partners and being as innovative and responsive as necessary. It was noted that both the College and the Association potentially have the technology infrastructure to run such a meeting through an online platform. It was eventually agreed that a working group of organisers from all founding partners and NIAA constituents should be assembled to discuss further and promptly begin planning for a 1-day online event to take place in the autumn/winter period.

**ACTION: Ms Hines to set up virtual meeting between core organising group****NIAAB+RC/07.2020/8 NIAA GRANTS**

Prof Wilson introduced his written report on the most recent activity of the NIAA grants function. Round 1 had been suspended along with all other NIAA research activity earlier in the spring. Since the previous meeting the Grants Officer and NIAA secretariat had been in communication with funding partners on the possibility and likelihood of participation in a grants round 2 this year. Following these responses Prof Wilson was proposing that the NIAA should run a grants round 2 later in the autumn, which would be at a reduced level than is usual due to lower resources available and also bear in mind any possibility for a second COVID peak should this occur and which could cause disruption to the process, which will be made clear to applicants at the outset. Prof Wilson clarified that the intention is to open the round subsequent to this meeting and on approval from the NIAA Board, and to run the round on the same timetable as had originally been planned with a closing date in September and decisions made at the committee meeting in December. Should there be any disruption or impact on clinical duties due to COVID, any submitted applications would be held over until a future round. Prof Wilson thanked colleagues at the Association and BJA for their support in this matter. Members were supportive of this course of action to continue with a second grants round this year under the circumstances, and extended thanks to the funding partners who were able to commit to this.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/9 BOC CHAIR OF ANAESTHESIA AWARD**

Prof Hall verbally updated members on actions taken since the previous Board meeting, where it was agreed that any further activity relating to the BOC Award would be suspended until later in the year. All submitted applications were removed from the process to essentially 'clear the slate' and provide a level playing field for all applicants given the potential effect of COVID on available project resources. Prof Hall advised members that the BOC Award process would need to be re-started in the context of the changed wider clinical environment – previous applicants should be given the opportunity to resubmit their previous application or a fresh project, and it was discussed whether a focus on COVID research should be encouraged or required. New applications can also now be invited given the change in focus. Comments included whether there may already be too much COVID research being progressed, and whether we should instead invite projects looking at the wider clinical research landscape post-pandemic more generally. It was agreed that the BOC Award, given its high profile and substantial financial offer, should definitely go forward in the current year with revised advertising to invite applications that have a focus on research in a post-pandemic climate, but should not exclude the more traditional applications that may have been submitted prior to COVID. Prof Hall agreed to discuss in a separate meeting with NIAA Secretariat the process for re-opening the BOC Award given the comments made during the meeting.

**ACTION: Prof Hall & Ms Hines to revise BOC Award rubric to reflect current climate and encourage further applications.**

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/10 NIHR SPECIALITY GROUP**

Prof Grocott provided a brief verbal update to members, advising that the specialty portfolio is slowly returning to its pre-COVID focus. This is still variable depending on the location of the study and the prevalence of COVID affecting any other research being considered viable. Research nurses and fellows are also only just starting to return to their regular posts following clinical redeployment during the peak of the crisis. Prof Grocott also noted there are some concerns over CRN funding however grant funding streams seem to remain stable.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/11 CLINICAL TRIALS NETWORK**

Prof Pearce provided an update on CTN progress to accompany the written metrics report that had been circulated, noting that many of its regular activities have been halted due to the pandemic but are now starting to be resumed. Dr Joyce Yeung has been successful in her application to fund the first CTN-led study, VITAL, which has been awarded c. £1.5m funding from the NIHR and has now been formally confirmed. The CTN is awaiting the outcome of a recent application to the NIHR's RfPB fund for another CTN-led study on the use of ibuprofen in patients undergoing elective gut surgery. Following the outcome of this application, the CTN then plan to promote the successful grant award(s) and to revisit the conversation of future funding with Rosetrees, with the added benefit of being able to prove the CTN's tangible success in securing funding elsewhere. Further discussions are required on whether the large NIHR grant funds can be used to offset the CTN's costs in any way, which will be held offline. Prof Pearce also noted that the process of recruiting his successor once his term ends in April 2021 is underway, and a timeline has been drafted with a transitional period as the new Director takes up the post and a handover period with Prof Pearce is planned until July 2021.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/12 HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTRE**

In the absence of Prof Moonesinghe there was no discussion on this item.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/13 EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE AND DISCOVERY SCIENCE GROUP**

In the absence of Dr Ackland there was no further discussion under this item.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/14 MILITARY ANAESTHESIA**

Lt Col Woolley updated members advising that he has been extended in his post for a further three years, and thanked Prof Grocott and Prof Wilson for reviewing the CVs of applicants to the vacant posts in his department. Col Woolley also highlighted there has been discussion within his department on whether the NIAA approval for MOD posts should be made prior to appointment or afterwards. It was agreed that this conversation should be taken offline in discussion with Prof Grocott. Col Woolley also noted that he is being deployed overseas later this year and a substitute will attend upcoming meetings until his return.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business discussed.

**NIAAB+RC/07.2020/16 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- NIAA Board, Tuesday 10 November 2020, 14:00 – 16:00, Teleconference
- 2021 meeting dates TBC

**ACTION POINTS**

Item		Responsible	Action	Due
2	Minutes of previous meeting	Ms Hines	Upload the confirmed non-confidential minutes of Board meeting held on 11 May 2020 to the NIAA website	Next meeting
4	Academic Training	Dr Martin	Liaise with NIHR to gather information on national ACF/CL posts, to collate and post on NIAA website	Next meeting

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6	External Review	Prof Grocott	Approach alternative review panel members if necessary	Next meeting
		Ms Hines	Contact NIAA stakeholders to offer opportunity to revise contributing review statements in light of COVID-19	Next meeting
7	Anaesthesia Research	Ms Hines	Set up virtual meeting between core organising group	ASAP
9	BOC Chair of Anaesthesia	Prof Hall Ms Hines	Revise BOC Award rubric to reflect current climate and encourage further applications.	ASAP