The Royal College of Anaesthetists, Churchill House, 35 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4SG

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ACADEMIC ANAESTHESIA
RESEARCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 2 February 2012 at 10:30 am
in the 6th Floor Meeting Room at the Royal College of Anaesthetists

Members:
Prof D J Rowbotham Royal College of Anaesthetists, Chairman NIAA Research Council
Dr P Clyburn Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland
Dr K Forrest Co-optee – Society for Education in Anaesthesia
Prof H Galley Co-optee - Anaesthetic Research Society
Dr R Gill Co-optee – Association of Cardiothoracic Anaesthetists
Prof M Grocott Co-optee – Health Services Research Centre
Mr D Hepworth Co-optee – Lay representative, Patient Liaison Group
Dr S J Howell Co-optee – Vascular Anaesthesia Society of Great Britain & Ireland / Research Priority Setting Exercise
Prof D Lambert Co-optee – NIAA Grants Officer
Prof M Leuwer Co-optee – NIHR CLRN Lead for Anaesthesia
Prof R P Mahajan Royal College of Anaesthetists, Chairman NIAA Board
Dr I Moppett Co-optee – BJA Grants Officer
Prof M Mythen Co-optee – University College London
Dr M Nathanson Anaesthesia
Prof J J Pandit Co-optee - Difficult Airway Society / Research Priority Setting Exercise
Dr F Plaat Co-optee - Obstetric Anaesthetists’ Association
Dr P Razis Co-optee – Neuroanaesthesia Society of Great Britain and Ireland
Dr N Scott Co-optee – Regional Anaesthesia UK
Dr S Walker Co-optee - Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists
Prof N R Webster British Journal of Anaesthesia

In attendance:
Ms S Drake Royal College of Anaesthetists (Director of Education)
Mrs M Cenan Senior NIAA and HSRC Administrator
Miss C Bunnell Committee Secretary (NIAA Administrator)
NIAARC/01/2012 WELCOME
The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

NIAARC/02/2012 APOLOGIES
Apologies were received from Professor Galley (Anaesthetic Research Society, ARS), Dr Gill (Association of Cardiothoracic Anaesthetists, ACTA), Professor Pandit (Difficult Airway Society, DAS), Dr Scott (Regional Anaesthesia UK, RA UK) and Professor Webster (British Journal of Anaesthesia, BJA).

NIAARC/03/2012 MINUTES
The confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 October 2011 were approved as a correct record. The Chair clarified the purpose of the non-confidential minutes and it was noted that these would be uploaded to the National Institute of Academic Anaesthesia (NIAA) website after the meeting.

ACTION: NIAA Administrator to upload the non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2011 to the NIAA website.

NIAARC/04/2012 MATTERS ARISING
There were no matters arising that were not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

NIAARC/05/2012 NIAA AWAY DAY
The Research Council received a discussion paper summarising the main outcomes from the NIAA Away Day held on Friday 11 November 2011 from the Director of Education. Members considered each of the key actions arising from the day in turn and were invited to comment on the paper as a whole. It was noted that the document would be discussed in further detail by the NIAA Board that afternoon.

(i) Research Strategy
This item prompted a wide-ranging discussion and a number of different viewpoints were expressed by members of the Research Council.

One of the main actions arising from the Away Day had been for specialist society members to identify their research priorities in order to lay the foundations for the development of an overarching research strategy for the Institute. Dr Forrest tabled the results of a survey for the Society for Education in Anaesthesia UK (SEA UK). The Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists (APA), the Obstetric Anaesthetists’ Association (OAA) and the Neuroanaesthesia Society of Great Britain and Ireland (NASGBI) confirmed that they were conducting similar surveys of their membership.

The results of the SEA UK survey indicated that there was some support amongst its members for the idea of pooling funds with other societies in order to create more significant grants. The Chair invited members to discuss this more widely since it was important to establish the degree of support for combining funds before making it a key element of any future research strategy.

Several members of the Research Council were in favour of adopting a more clearly defined, strategic approach by combining funds and directing them towards national priority areas. Projects arising from this funding would then have greater financial leverage which could potentially put them in a stronger position to contend for NIHR status. It was suggested that the larger funders such as the AAGBI and BJA could be
invited to set a precedent in terms of adopting new funding model, which over time would develop naturally as smaller societies gained confidence in the new approaches.

There was clear interest and support amongst specialist society members for collaboration, however there was a sense that societies would not want to commit to strategies that had been decided on their behalf. Also, the smaller grants were seen as being important for trainee applicants looking to start small and gain experience in conducting research.

On reflection, the Chair did not feel that there was overwhelming support on the part of the specialist societies for pooling money on a large scale into an undesignated fund. However, there was sympathy for collaboration on well-defined projects and he acknowledged that joint funding was already taking place on an ad hoc basis. He affirmed that the specialist societies were already making a contribution to the common good by managing their funds in this way.

Members then returned to the Away Day discussion paper. Dr Howell requested that before the paper was circulated more widely, an Executive Summary be produced to highlight the positive messages from the day, to acknowledge that members already worked collaboratively, that one research priority setting exercise had already taken place and that another was being conducted through the specialist societies. Dr Nathanson also made several comments for inclusion from the AAGBI’s perspective and agreed to email these to Ms Drake separately.

**ACTIONS:**

- The Director of Education to revise the Away Day discussion paper, creating an Executive Summary and liaising with Dr Nathanson in terms of incorporating additional points from the AAGBI. Once done the document to be uploaded to the NIAA website and shared more widely with specialist society members.

- **Specialist society members** to share the results of their membership surveys once available.

- The Research Strategy Working Group to present a draft proposal for consideration at the next Research Council meeting on 19 April.

(ii) **NIAA Charity**

A further outcome from the Away Day was the decision to conduct a feasibility study into establishing a charity for the NIAA. The charity could become a funding partner and would enable the NIAA to pursue its strategy more actively. It could also promote awareness of the NIAA and its work.

The Research Council supported the proposal and it was agreed that Professor Grocott would submit an outline feasibility study for consideration at the next meeting.

**ACTION:**

- Professor Grocott to provide an outline feasibility study regarding the establishment of a charity for the NIAA for consideration at the next meeting on 19 April.
Communications Plan
The Research Council received a draft Communications Plan from the Director of Education and Professor Lambert. The Plan set out ways in which the NIAA’s achievements could be showcased both regionally and nationally through a variety of methods, including presence at exhibition stands and talks at district general hospitals given by members of the NIAA Board and Research Council.

The forthcoming NIAA Comprehensive Review would be one means of promoting the Institute, and there were also plans to produce posters and an A4 flyer. A draft of the latter was tabled at the meeting for information. These publications would aim to dispel misconceptions about the NIAA and attract interest in its work.

Professor Lambert highlighted the audit data in Appendix 1 as this addressed some of the key questions raised at the Away Day regarding the types of project funded by the NIAA and the regional spread of awards. He encouraged members to share this information with their colleagues.

The plan included a draft budget for activities, which Ms Drake confirmed would be discussed further by the College’s Finance Committee.

**ACTION:** Research Council to submit any comments on the Communications Plan to Ms Drake.

ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL RESEARCH CHARITIES
One recommendation made by Mr Simon Denegri, facilitator at the NIAA Away Day, had been that the NIAA consider joining the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). The Association is a membership organisation of the leading medical and health research charities in the UK, which focuses on improving medical research. After discussion members agreed to explore this further.

**ACTION:** The NIAA Administrator to obtain further details from Mr Denegri and report back at the next meeting.

GOVERNANCE

(i) It was noted that as of 1 April the next specialist society representative on the NIAA Board would come from the OAA.

(ii) Further to the success of the new assessment procedure for small grants established last year, it was decided that, pending agreement, the membership of the Small Grants Sub-committee would remain the same and that the committee would be chaired by Dr Forrest. It was noted that an earlier deadline would be set for applications this year to ensure that decisions could be reported at the Research Council meeting on Thursday 27 September. NB. *It has since been agreed that applications for the Maurice P Hudson Prize will also be assessed by the sub-committee, whilst applications for the Macintosh Professorship and Payne-Stafford-Tan Award will be considered by the NIAA Board.*
Professor Leuwer provided a verbal update on the specialty group and its activities. He reported that he was compiling the group’s Annual Report and was pleased to confirm that all of the studies on the Group’s portfolio were recruiting. However, he observed that many studies were setting high recruitment targets which were proving difficult to achieve. He explained that it was possible for funders to issue a no-cost extension letter to overcome recruitment problems, meaning that projects were more likely to succeed by hitting their targets. Fortunately this option was now known to increasing numbers of investigators.

Professor Leuwer also reported that the Specialty Group’s industry liaison meeting would be held on 13 March, and that the purpose of the meeting was to advertise the Comprehensive Local Research Networks to industry.

NIAARC/10/2012 GRANT OFFICER’S REPORT
Research Council received the Grant Officer’s Report for 2011 Round 2 and noted that 24 applications had been received and eight awards made for a total of £288,855. This was the first time that the AAGBI, BJA and RCoA had collaborated to fund the Small Project Grants, and five awards had been made under this category. It was noted that details of all the grants available in Round 1 2012 were now on the website and the closing date for applications was noon on Friday 20 April 2012.

The Grant Officer stated that he was keen to develop a generic application form which could be adopted by all the funding partners in order to work towards creating a unified look and feel for NIAA grants documentation.

The Chair thanked Professor Lambert for his update and for his great commitment to the grant process which made it so successful.

ACTIONS:  
Professor Lambert to produce a draft application form for the NIAA research grants for consideration at the next meeting.

The NIAA Administrator to confirm and circulate the date of next NIAA Grants Committee meeting.

NIAARC/11/2012 HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTRE
The Research Council received a verbal update from the Director of the HSRC, Professor Grocott, and noted that a written report would be submitted to the next meeting and to alternate meetings thereafter.

(i) National Emergency Laparotomy Audit  
Professor Grocott was pleased to confirm that this audit had been successful in its bid for funding from the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP). A pre-qualifying questionnaire had been completed and work on a more substantive application would begin shortly for a deadline in early March. The work would go forward in collaboration with the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre (ICNARC) and the Royal College of Surgeons’ Clinical Effectiveness Unit.
(ii) **HSRC Recruitment**
Recruitment for the position of HSRC Researcher and a statistician was ongoing. Meanwhile two Research Fellows had been appointed and they would start in April and August respectively.

(iii) It was also noted that Dr Moonesinghe’s work on systematic reviews was underway, that a survey to Clinical Directors and College Tutors about outcome measures was in hand, and that the HSRC’s work with the College’s Revalidation Committee to develop a more coordinated approach to audits was in progress.

Finally, Professor Grocott reported that the next HSRC Perioperative Care Research Forum would take place on 12 March and that a similar Forum to be run with the Faculty of Pain was scheduled to take place in September.

**NIAARC/12/2012  RESEARCH PRIORITY SETTING EXERCISE**
Dr Howell reported that the shortlisted questions submitted for the research priority setting exercise had been uploaded to the NIAA website and could be viewed at: [http://www.niaa.org.uk/article.php?newsid=408](http://www.niaa.org.uk/article.php?newsid=408). Mark Fenton, Editor of UK DUETS (UK Database of Uncertainties about the Effects of Treatments), had confirmed that the questions would also be uploaded on to the UK DUETS website within the next two months.

Dr Howell tabled an e-letter regarding the Research Priority Setting Exercise for information, and reported that he would be giving a presentation on the research priority setting exercise to the Euroanaesthesia Conference in Paris in June.

In terms of conducting a second research priority setting exercise, Dr Howell supported combining the outcomes of the first exercise with the findings of the member surveys currently being carried out by the specialist societies.

**ACTION:** The Research Strategy Working Group to consider how to take the research priority setting exercise forward.

**NIAARC/13/2012  NIAA COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW**
The Research Council received a tabled copy of the latest version of the NIAA Comprehensive Review for 2008-2011 and a copy of the draft distribution list. The Director of Education invited members to comment on the document and to suggest additions to the distribution list. As well as being posted, it was noted that some copies of the Review would be distributed at events and uploaded to usb sticks which would be branded with the NIAA and HSRC logos. Members were asked to send their distribution suggestions to Ms Drake by the end of the week.

**ACTION:** Research Council Members to submit their comments on the Review and the distribution list by the week ending 10 February 2012.

**NIAARC/14/2012  NIAA WEBSITE**
The Research Council noted that a Researcher’s Database had been created on the NIAA website as a resource for research-interested individuals looking to share their areas of interest and that fifteen people were currently registered. The NIAA Administrator reported that the form included a field for individuals to enter their researcher ID and that this information would be used by the HSRC for anonymised benchmarking purposes.
ACTION: The NIAA Administrator to advertise the database more widely by inviting all successful grant applicants to join.

NIAARC/15/2012 NIAA EXHIBITION STAND
Members of Research Council were asked to confirm their availability to assist on the NIAA stand at the following events:

- The RCoA Anniversary Meeting: 14-15 March at the Royal Institute of British Architects, London
- The RCoA Annual Congress: 3-4 May at the Institute of Engineering and Technology, London
- The GAT Annual Scientific Meeting; 27 – 29 June, Glasgow

ACTION: The NIAA Administrator to circulate a further call for volunteers by email.

NIAARC/16/2012 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
Thursday 19 April 2012 at 10:30 am
Thursday 27 September 2012 at 10:30 am

NIAARC/17/2012 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Professor Lambert referred to Professor Phil Hopkins’ recent email to the NIAA regarding closer working between the ARS and the NIAA. The Director for Education confirmed that this was in hand and that she would be liaising with Professor Hopkins to discuss the matter in further detail.

ACTION: Ms Drake to liaise with Professor Mahajan and Professor Hopkins regarding greater collaboration between the ARS and the NIAA.
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<td>AAGBI</td>
<td>Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland</td>
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